

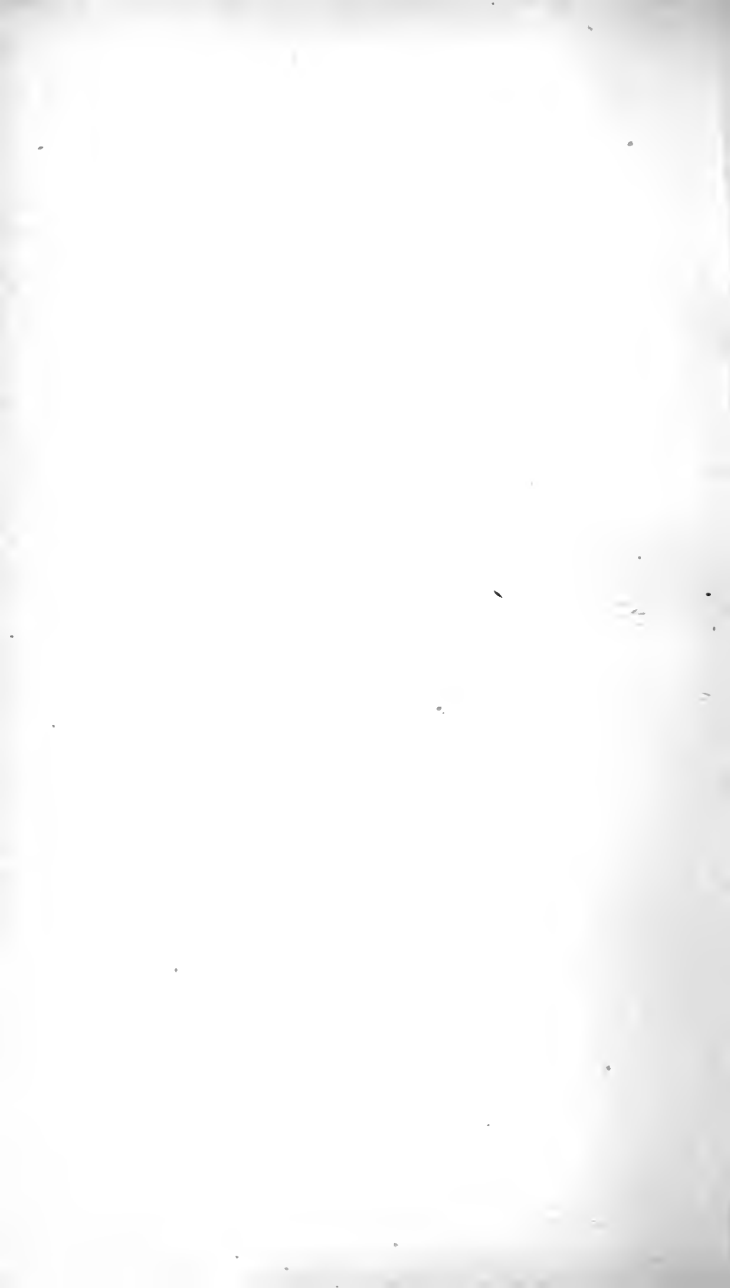




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BY

CLARA AUGUSTA.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1873.

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POEMS.

A PART.

THE homeless wind sweeps up the rack
From the waste of turbid sea ;
I shudder to think that dismal waste
Lieth 'tween thee and me,
Lieth 'tween thee and me,
And the dun earth shrouds thy breast ;
But I know the verdant grass and flowers
Are tender of thy rest.

Heavily down on the eerie wind
Beats the frozen winter rain,—
It throbs in the deep, dark forest depths
Like a human heart in pain,
Like a human heart in pain,
As my own throbs on to-night,
Thinking of thee in the cold and dark,
And I in the warmth and light.

Never a message cometh to me ;

• Oh, how cruel it seems !

Never a word from the lost, lost one !

Not even in midnight dreams,

Not even in midnight dreams.

Oh, could it only be !

Send me a token ! waken a thrill

Of the old-time ecstasy !

Vain it is ! wild it is ! I will be still.

Dead feet never come back !

Why should they stray to the world again,

Out of the heavenly track ?

Out of the heavenly track ?

Ah, sinks my heart like a stone !

Thou art resting in paradise,—

I am wandering alone !

THE ASPHODEL.

A FAIRY queen, one radiant night,

Strayed from her fabled sphere,

Down through the crimson clouds that filled

The mellow atmosphere ;

She saw this earth hung like a lamp

In the great silent void,

A miracle of wondrous form,—

A finger-mark of God.

She folded up her breezy wings

To visit this new land,

And sank upon a sea-weed leaf

Down on the harbor sand ;

The moisture chilled her tender limbs,
She trembled on her bed,
The hoarse sea-moanings tired her heart,
And hurt her throbbing head.

She said, "I'll call my minions down
To build a palace hall,
Where I can dwell whene'er I choose
To make this earth a call."
She struck her lute, a blade of grass,—
A hundred fairies came,
With little wands of yellow light
And crowns of amber flame.

Soon as she told her royal wish
They bowed to the behest,
And flew away, each with her hand
Of fealty on her breast.
A palace rose: its towers were gold,
Its walls of crimson silk,
Its windows of the clearest pearl,
Its floors as white as milk.

Triumphant went the fairy queen
Her new-made home to see;
A gallant orchestra there was
To greet her majesty.
Robins, and bees, and grasshoppers,
Sang each a rare refrain,—
And over all the moonlight poured
Its glittering silver rain.

A miracle of art and taste
The fairy palace stood ;
The royal perfume of its sweets
Floating for many a rood.
And to this day maids love the flower
Where the queen came to dwell,
And bind within their wealth of curls
The peerless Asphodel.

COURAGE.

KEEP up your courage, friend,
Nor falter on the track ;
Look up, toil bravely on,
And scorn to languish back.
A true heart rarely fails to win,—
A will can make a way ;
The darkest night will yield at last
Unto the perfect day.

See yonder little flower
You've crushed beneath your tread,
The sunshine and the shower
Beat on its bended head ;
Though bowed it is not broke :
It rises up again,
And sheds a sweet perfume across
The arid desert plain.

Then like the tender flower
Be ye, oh, weary man !
In countless ways God blesseth you,—
Deny it if you can.
You've love to cheer your heart,
You've strength, and gracious health ;
For these full many a lordly peer
Would gladly yield his wealth.

Never despair ! it kills the life,
And digs an early grave ;
The man who rails so much at Fate
But makes himself her slave.
Up ! rouse ye to the work !
Resolve to victory gain ;
And hopes shall rise, and bear rich fruit,
Which long in dust have lain.

THE PILGRIM.

JERUSALEM ! ah, can it be
Mine eyes behold thy towers ?
The slanting sunlight pours on thee
Its floods of crimson flowers ;
Thy heights rise up, dim, weird, and grim,
Against the blood-red sky :
Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
In holy awe I cry.

But where, oh where, the pride and pomp
Swayed once within thy walls?
Oh, where the gorgeous panoply
Of Herod's palace halls?
Oh, where the shrine, and sacred cups,
The temple, font, and throne,
Ere Saracen and ruthless Turk
Profaned the altar-stone?

The sword, the devastating sword,
Has made thee desolate;
And never more, oh, Palestine!
Shalt thou be called the great.
The Cross and Crescent o'er thy hills
Have held alternate sway;
And Israel's persecuted tribes
Have vainly looked for day.

And where the date, and feathery palm,
And ancient cedars grew,
The Gentile plows have torn the soil,
Disturbed the hallowed dew;
And feet unsanctified have pressed
The turf of Zion's hill;
And foreign hordes laved in the flood
Of Cedron's holy rill.

The Mount of Olives! awful gloom
Hovers abroad o'er thee!
He wept and prayed upon thy brow
In deepest agony!

And from thy summit, pure and wise
His words like balm distilled ;
And Jew, and scribe, and Pharisee
With awe of Him were filled.

Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
I've wandered o'er the sea,
And passed by many a classic shrine,
Dreaming the while of thee.
And resting 'neath this fig-tree's shade,
I gaze on all thy dearth ;
But still, Jerusalem, thou art
The holiest spot on earth !

A DEAD ROSE.

THREE years ago to-night,—a summer night,
With lines of purple in the western sky,
The sea-waves rolling up the beach foam white,
And in the distance a ship sailing by,
A crescent moon pallid behind gray clouds,—
Oh, why do young moons pale and sunsets die?—

We drifted on beyond the rocky isles
That guard the broadening outlet of the bay,
And watched the billows, mighty piles on piles,
As, bounding in, they drenched us with their spray ;
And all the land, and all the starry sky,
In perfect peace and silence tranced lay.

We anchored just below the reach of sand
That glittered golden in the misty light ;
And up the rocks we clambered hand in hand,
Forgetting that around us crept the night ;
There is no night for those who live and love :
All time is merged in one intense delight.

How near it seems to me !—that dreamy hush
Of silent sky, and subtle, sensuous air ;
How 'neath his eyes my face burned with a flush
No other glance can ever summon there !
His head bent down ; I felt his gentle hand
Cover my fingers, and his breath my hair.

He gathered from a bush, heavy with dew,
A single rose, and touched it with his lips ;
And henceforth roses, to my fancy, grew
Sweet as the nectar that the brown bee sips.
He laid it on my cheek and, smiling, said,
The roses *there* put his rose in eclipse.

Ah, well ! 'tis over. Two long years ago
I hid this rose with my most sacred things ;
Its grace and glory gone, its light and glow,
All—save the perfume that around it clings.
I lay it by,—the faint, sweet summer smell
A sense of loss forever to me brings.

THE PINES.

ABOVE the highland ridge they lift
Their belt of sombre green;
The meadows and the silvery stream
In silence lie between.
The pale-leaved beeches and the elms
Wave in the lightest breeze;
But it would need a rude, fierce blast
To sway these old pine-trees.

Stern sentinels for many a year,
What changes have o'erswept
The land they look on, since their watch
In solemn state they've kept!
They've heard the songs of other days
From other lips than ours,—
A hundred Junes have smiled on them,
Spicy and sweet with flowers.

They've seen the smoke of many a cot
Rise bluely on the air,
From happy hearths that now are cold,
And desolate, and bare.
Beneath their shadow lie the graves
Of those who, long ago,
Like us, looked up to see the light
Of sunset fade and glow.

The night descends, the red flush fades,
The pines are black with gloom,—
I shut the window, and give thought
And olden memories room ;
And, like a breath of rare perfume,
Stealing through sweet lush vines,
Come thoughts of days, bright summer days,
Amid the dark old pines.

LOST.

THE drifting rain came o'er the western hills,
The air was blind with spray ;
To thund'ring rivers swelled the simple rills,
The roaring torrents drowned the grinding mills,
The mists obscured the day.
She trod with nimble feet the beaten track,
Up, up the mountain's steep,
Along the dingle deep, nor looked she back,
Though in her train the frozen rain
Leaped in a cataract.

The sheep were on the heights,—her lamb, her pet,
She called his gentle name ;
And, through the flying drifts of cold and wet,
The heaving mists around her like a net,
She vanished like a flame.

The avalanche burst from the mountain's side
And crushed the mighty trees,
Ran down the crags in seas, a deathly tide;
And men grew pale, and on the gale
Rang curse and prayer allied.

From night the morning came. The red sun flush
Lay on the highlands bleak;
And in the dreamy air there was a hush,
And on the dismal scene there was a blush
Like shame on anger's cheek;
But never home came lamb or maiden more,
Down, down the mountain's steep.
But, fright'ning the old wives, when tempests roar,
Her voice calls clear on night's dead ear
The lamb's name as before.

THE SLEIGH-RIDE.

BRIGHT gleam the golden stars spangling the blue,
Round the white moon lifts her splendor to view,—
Low in the west the faint light of day
Dies in its red flush softly away;
Pearl-clear the snow robe spread o'er the land,
White with the frost flowers all the trees stand.

Bring up the courser! hang on the bells!
Hurrah for a sleigh-ride o'er hills and o'er dells!
In 'mid the fur robes! slacken the rein,—
Away like the wind o'er the hard beaten plain!

Oh, Fate, grant us wings ! we are panting for flight
Through the sharp biting cold of this bright winter
night !

Steed, jingle the bells ! toss your rich flowing mane !
And lift your proud head in your haughty disdain !
On over the piled drifts like lightning-winged light,—
Up, up the steep hills like deer in a fright,—
Right merrily onward and onward we go !
Ye gods ! there is naught will compare with the snow !

IN SPRING.

THE skies are blue as English violets,
The breeze suggests rare tropic airs of balm ;
The sun in purple splendor nightly sets,
And evening closes with a saintly calm.

The mornings are ablaze with red and gold ;
The sunlight takes a warmer, richer hue ;
Rare possibilities the white clouds hold,
Of grateful shadow, and of cooling dew.

The brooks, let loose, bound down the rocky heights ;
No more the Frost King binds to sleep and dreams,
No more the cold gems with pale chrysolites
The shrubs that droop above the ice-locked streams.

The buds swell into greenest wealth of leaves
Upon the great elm just without the door ;
The robin chirps within the forest-trees,
The blue-bird whistles from the barren moor.

The frog pipes shrilly in the lonesome swamp,
The sweet notes of the thrush break softly in ;
And, like the blood-red banners of a camp,
The scarlet maples show their blossoming.

The wild arbutus blushes in the dell,—
The damp, cool dell, beneath the old pine-trees,—
A breath of subtlest fragrance in each cell,
Of summer's sweetness uttering prophecies.

The day declines, dissolves into the night,
All lush and moist with smell of growing leaves,
And over all the young moon sheds its light
Before it sinks behind the western trees.

THE DEATH-BED.

FAINTLY came her breathing
From her troubled breast ;
Feebly on the pillows
Sank her head to rest.
Calmly closed her eyelids,
Passed her smile away,
As the morning vapors
Flee the light of day.

Paler grew her forehead
With each panting breath,
Ghastly o'er her features
Lay the seal of death.
Clasped her slender fingers
On her bosom meek ;
Fell the golden tresses
O'er her pallid cheek.

Passed her breath so calmly
That we never knew
When she walked in shadow
Death's dark valley through ;
Never knew the moment
When she paused to rest,
At the gate which foldeth
Ever in the Blest.

Passed she like the fragrance
Of some fading flower,
Or like summer sunbeams
When the tempests lower ;
Left us but her memory,
Sweet for evermore,—
Earth has lost her for us,
Heaven will restore.

F A I T H.

WHEN threat'ning clouds of gloom and darkness rise,
And shut me out from all the cheering light
That hope and love shed on my life's fair skies,
And joy's glad day gives place to sorrow's night,—
When buds of promise fade before they bloom,
And crystal cups break at the fountain's brink,
Or spill their sweetest nectar to make room
For bitter draughts He giveth me to drink,—
Shall I complain, and let my heart despair,
And from Faith's golden chain remove a link?

If thorns do pierce me unto bitterest pain,
They pierced the One who suffered for my sin;
If burdens press me sorely when I fain
Would rest, shall dark doubt enter in
To clog my soul and bind it unto dust?
To turn my poor eyes earthward evermore?
To dim the sweet perfection of my trust,—
To cloud in maze of fear th' eternal shore?
To make my feet slip from the narrow way
That ends at last before the opening Door?

From the fierce warfare of the elements,
From thunder, lightning, hail, and driving rain,
From wild tornadoes, when tried Nature vents
In shuddering throes her agony of pain,—

Come forth those days when all the atmosphere
Is redolent and ripe with tender glow,—
Those perfect days when heaven stoops down so near
The angels fan us with their wings of snow ;
So cometh perfect peace and faith in God
To human hearts when wrung with bitterest woe.

All trials that befall are for our good ;
We would not lose a single chastening touch
If thoroughly God's plan we understood,
And knew affliction profiteth so much !
Oh, let me wear my Faith, an amulet,
That shall ward off all doubt ! Make me thine own ;
And early though my sun of life shall set,
Give me the grace to say,—“Thy will be done !”
And, holding not the things of earth too close,
Turn unto God, and cling to Him alone.

A LITTLE HISTORY.

DECEMBER's gloom is over earth,
The dead leaves moan and sigh,
And stark beneath a clouded moon
The frozen streamlets lie.

I linger where the black-leaved pines
Chant weird psalms faint and low,
And, like a breath of sweet perfume,
Come dreams of long ago.

She left us when the autumn woods
Were gilt with tawny gold,
And frost-flowers white as Eastern pearls
Starred heath, and moor, and wold.

The maples broke their blood-red hearts
Upon their native hills ;
And amber sunshine, soft and calm,
Fell through the mellow stills.

But when she went the sunshine paled,—
She took the light away ;
The blue sky lost its tender blue,
The day was *not* the day.

The moonshine, falling down the void
In silent silver rain,
Filled all my heart with vague unrest
And thrills of tender pain.

She came back in the early spring,
When earth was all aglow,
And from the blooming orchard-trees
Drifted the fragrant snow ;

Came back in jewels and in silks,
And velvets rich and rare,—
With laces worth their weight in gold
Looped in her shining hair.

She touched my fingers when we met ;
I was a bashful clown,
Who tilled her father's wide-spread lands
With sinewy hands and brown.

There was a bridal brave and gay,
Wine, music of guitars,
Laughter, and dancing on the turf
Beneath the midnight stars.

She gave her dainty hand away ;
And *he* was grave and tall,
White-haired,—a proud aristocrat,—
A Croesus,—that was all.

That night we met beside the spring
Where oft we'd played of old ;
The young moon gemmed her brow with pearl,
And kissed her hair's dun gold.

My eyes spoke to her ! all my life
Of stern despair, and pain,
Rushed up to clamor at my lips,—
I crushed it back again.

But for one moment heart read heart !
Her cheeks' glow waned and fled ;
She stood before me cold and white
As marble o'er the dead.

Oh, God ! 'twere sin to kiss her mouth,
Or touch with mine her hand !
I was a low-born farmer boy,—
She lady of the land !

Now, what to me are trees and flowers,
And songs of summer birds ?
What music comes to me in winds,
Or low of distant herds ?

I only wonder if she thinks,
In her manorial halls,
Of seasons when the grapes are red
Above Cochecho Falls.

I wonder if she'd like to smell
Once more the mint and balm ;
Or if she'd care to hear again
The pine woods chant their psalm.

I wonder if her jeweled breast
Is stirred by one chance thought
Of what life *might have been* to her,—
Of what love *might* have brought.

COCHECHO RIVER.

A SILVER ribbon winding calm and slow
Across the meadows where the daisies grow,
'Tween steep high banks fringed with the feath'ry
sedge,

Where elms and birches sweep the water's edge,
And the red sunbeams with a golden glint
Paint the faint ripples round the peppermint.

In the mild twilights of the summer days,
When hill and highland hide in purple haze,
A breath of music steals up faint and low,—
The gliding of the river, calm and slow,
O'er glittering pebbles just beyond the bridge,
Where the great eddy sweeps the Chestnut Ridge.

Down in the gorge below the rugged hill,
Half hid in shadow stands the brown old mill,
And just above the willows bend so low,
Beneath the wild clematis' blooms of snow,—
So very low they dip within the tide,
And with perpetual dew are glorified.

In autumn-time the loaded grapevine's scent
With thyme, and mint, and sedge is sweetly blent ;
And where the forest stretches cool and green,
With belts of sunshine and of shade between,
The heavy air is full of smells of pine
Blending a subtle fragrance with the vine.

Oh, fair Cochecho ! sweeping on thy way,
Past old farm-houses, mossy eaved and gray,
Make music for the factory's patient slave,
Flash hope and beauty from thy sparkling wave ;
Gladden the lowlands,—linger 'mid the flowers,—
And mind me sometimes of lost summer hours.

FOUND DROWNED.

Down past the rushes so dense and dank,
Over the snow-white sands,—
The treacherous, gleaming sands,—
And down the face of the slippery bank
Where the old gray poplar stands,—

We hurried with faces pale and set.
Oh, the steel-blue sky ! oh, the cold and wet !
The moon was hidden, the grass was damp
With ghostly fogs, and the wild, fierce tramp
Of the wind swept through the shuddering trees.
Oh, dreary forest ! oh, cold, bleak seas !

The waters gurgled ; the tide rushed in,—
 In o'er the moaning bar,
 The fatal harbor bar,—
And we heard the thunderous roar and din
 Of the ocean depths afar.
The gloom grew denser, the night fell down
Over the sea, the harbor, the town ;
The wild gull screamed from the craggy rocks,
The fishing-schooners creaked in the docks ;
And through the masts of the wreck on the lee
The mad winds shrieked in their fiendish glee.

Oh, I remember it all so well !
 It is graven on stone,
 My heart's cold marble stone,—
So cold it is I shrink to look.
 Into its chambers lone.
All feeling I had was killed so dead,
I never writhed when the spirit fled.
Oh, the world is a desert ! and life is bleak !
If the soul be willing the flesh is weak !
But I'm looking vaguely, sometime, for light,—
In the Hereafter will all be right ?

Oh, they lifted him tenderly up
 From the river's cold bed,—
 The cruel, merciless bed !—
And a ray of moonlight pierced the clouds
 And touched his drownéd head.
They lifted him up with the glittering gold
Of his soft hair dripping with wet and cold,—
And his blue eyes open, and fixed, and wide,
And his cheek dead white in the chill salt tide ;
And the sweet mouth pale as a thread of mist,—
Oh, God ! the mouth I so oft had kissed !

Drownéd ! they said ; and they tended me
 Like as they would a child,—
 A pitiful little child.
They smoothed my hair, and spoke kind words,
 And I looked up and smiled :
Smiled, because my heart was broke,—
Smiled, in thinking no other stroke
Could ever cause me a single pain ;
But life is weary, and death is gain.
Under the poplar gray, by the sea,
They buried him—they will bury me.

Ah, it is gloomy, sometimes, and sad,
 Tiresome for me to wait,—
 In the darkness here to wait,
Before I shall enter in at the courts
 That are shut by a golden gate.
I shall see the glory glow of his hair,—
I shall hear his tender voice on the air ;

And through the flush of the purple even,
I shall look in the eyes that have looked on heaven !
Patience a little ! from over the sea,
Darling, darling, I'm coming to thee !

GROWING OLD.

THEY sit together at the door
Through which, long years ago,
They passed, a newly-wedded pair,
In youth's first rosy glow.
Then her round cheek was red and warm,
Her hair was rippling gold ;
His form was stately as the oak :
But now they both are old.

Her blooming cheek is wrinkled now,
The sweet blue eyes are dim ;
But full of love and holy trust
They ever turn to him,
With the calm faith and hope she felt
Upon her bridal day,
When the long future, flower-clad,
Stretched out before her lay.

Now, in the eventide of life,
They watch the twilight haze
Grow on the hills and hang above
The chain of land-locked bays,—

They see the sun sink slowly down
To gladden other lands,—
They feel night coming, and they sit
Serene, with close-clasped hands.

THE FARMER.

God's blessing rest upon the man
Who tills the bounteous land,
And strews the yellow grain broadcast
With free, ungrudging hand ;
Who makes the barren moorland smile
With wheat and golden corn,
The verdant grass to spring, at will,
Where lurked the worthless thorn.

Oh, bless his toil with full success !
Let soft and gentle rains
Revive his thirsty pasture hills
And fertilize his plains !
And send the sunshine down to warm
The frosty breast of earth,
That crimson wealth of clover blooms
May spring to odorous birth !

An independent life is his,
Fraught but with *honest* gains,—
Wrung not from pale-faced, widowed ones,
Or orphans' hunger pains.

Honest and fearless, free and glad,
A very prince is he !
At peace with God, in love with truth,
With man in harmony.

His lot is cast in nature's fanes,
Beneath a lucky star,—
What is 't to him that railroad stocks
Are quoted under par ?
The banks may break, canals burst up,
And mining sections fail ;
He's left to him his wide-spread fields,
His threshing-floors, and flail.

His children throng about his knee
When gloaming-time creeps on,
And hang around his sturdy neck,
To kiss him one by one.
The ruddiest cheeks and sweetest lips,
The brightest eyes, are theirs,—
The rarest smile in all the town
The farmer's daughter wears.

God bless the farmer ! bless him well !
A royal life he owns !
He reads his lore from mountain heights,
His sermons from the stones ;
His college halls are nature's wilds,
And gorgeous summer sky,—
The vast cathedral where he prays
Is heaven's arched canopy.

Let the rich scorn his sunburnt hands,
And cheek so rough and brown ;
But when the proud man at his feast
In courtly glee sits down,
The luscious grape, the downy peach,
The wine in silver can,
The snowy bread—he owes them all
Unto the husbandman.

UNSOUGHT.

I GIVE thee all I have to give
From out my soul's unsounded deep ;
I could not give thee more and live,
My life is all I keep.

No hopes, no doubts, no fears abide,
To warm or chill my young life's blood,—
The golden gates I throw them wide
And lavish forth the flood.

My nightly prayers are all for thee ;
My thoughts and longings all are thine ;
The blessings that were meant for me,
Lord, make them thine, not mine.

Flowers yield their fragrance, wood-birds sing,
Streams feed the hungry, grasping sea,
Day and the sun their pure light bring ;
So bring I love to thee.

The summer rain falls down to bless
The thirsty world it murmurs o'er ;
And so in wordless happiness
I give, and ask no more.

I note full well thy heedless air,
From thy cold eyes I turn away ;
I know I have no portion there ;
But I can wait, and pray.

Perhaps,—I make no idling sure,—
Perhaps in years long hence,
That other world, so bright and pure,
May make me recompense.

IN SILENCE.

A LONG low line of blue hills toward the west,
Above them lingering still a crimson stain,—
A purple shade of azure in the east,
And lying under it a grass-grown plain.

A river broad and deep, with wooded shores,
Bearing upon its breast a boat snow-white,—
An idle rower leaning on the oars,
And drifting with the silence and the night.

The birds, so wearied with the day's sweet songs,
Have sought their eyries in the forest-trees ;
Not even a lonesome nightingale prolongs
The wild wood concert with her melodies.

The moon, so calm in holy quietude,
Sails in the pathless ocean of the blue ;
As if to cheer her queenly solitude,
A single star from the pale gloom peeps through.

The shadows thicken. On the southern ridge
The weird pine forest rises grim and black,—
The white road leading to the alder bridge
Gleams through the maples like a ghostly track.

The lush green meadows send up clouds of mist,
White as the snow that falls from wintry skies ;
Day's forehead pales where Night has stooped and
kissed . . .
To gloom and silence all her brilliant dyes.

WORK !

LAGGARD ! thou'rt sitting idly,
With useless folded hands,—
Unmindful of the desert spots
And wastes of barren lands.
Up ! rouse from this dead stupor,
And gird thine armor on !
When once a firm resolve is made,
Full half the battle's won !

What right hast thou to squander
The talents God has sent ?
What right in rust to bury
The powers He has lent ?

Do battle bravely, ever,
In stern defense of right,
And carve in faith a shining way
Up to the hills of light.

The whole world calls for labor !
There is a thirsty dearth
Of earnest, working Christian souls,
Throughout this wide-spread earth ;
A lack of strong-armed pioneers
To break the ranks of sin,
And woo to Virtue's safe retreat
The footsore wanderer in.

Up from this dull supineness !
Up with a righteous trust !
Why in this aimless, idle life
Let noble talents rust ?
Work while the day endureth,
Work ere the night shall come ;
At evening, when the shadows fall,
God calls his servants home.

MY FAITH.

WHEN quiet reigns upon the earth,
And placid is the sky,
With not an angry cloud to dim
The crystal vault on high ;
When gentle happiness is mine,
And care has fled my breast,

When not a stormy trouble tears
The calm sea of my rest,
O God, I fear that I ignore
Thy goodness and thy grace,
And turn to other shrines, away
From thy resplendent face !

When all around me is serene,
No threatening peril nigh,
And loving ones are by my side
To bid all trials fly,
I greatly fear me that I put
Aside my sacred trust,
And place my faith in other gods
Formed out of clay and dust ;
Though well I know all power but thine
Is impotent to save,
And that thy love, and thine alone,
Can find me in the grave.

But when grim danger glowers at me,
And chills my blood to stone ;
When fickle friends flee from my side
And leave me all alone ;
When heart and spirit faint and fail,
And flesh grows sorely weak :—
What can I do but come to Thee,
All broken, contrite, meek ?
For when the storms arise, and beat
My life-bark out to sea,
Whom have I, Lord, on earth beside,
And whom in heaven, but Thee ?

BENEATH THE SHADOW.

I WALK on the hill-tops, I smell the wild roses,—
Sweet roses that clamber and blossom at will,—
I gather whole handfuls, and wonder what sweetness
They lack,—and my heart lieth still
And dumb in the Present. With thoughts of the
Future?

Ah, no!—with a longing for blessedness fled.
Oh, Life so relentless! oh, Time! stop a moment,
And let me uncover the face of my dead.

The Past! Let me look at it only a moment:
An eternity boundless, exquisite in pain;
Oh, could I roll back the wheels of Time's chariot,
And live,—just live over that heaven again!
Rare heaven of sweetness! oh, heart mute with anguish,
Is there any bitterness like unto this,
In days that are barren and bleak as the desert,
The remembering of hours that were golden with
bliss?

One voice was the music to me of all Eden,
One smile was the heaven wherein I took rest.
Did I care if the world went on, or stood stagnant,
When his arms were around me, my head on his
breast?
Oh, silence was eloquent! sacredest stillness
Was sweeter than harp-notes or music of spheres;
I swam in a joy so profound, so exquisite,
It found no expression save only in tears.

Ah, well ! it is over. The fair skies are leaden,
The soft summer breezes are chill as the tomb ;
I shiver with dread as they sweep through the tree-tops,
They strike to my heart like the voices of doom.
Oh, is there no balsam, no healing in Gilead ?
No help for the anguish, no cure for the pain ?
Can I never escape from the weight of this burden ?
Shall I never come forth from the shadow again ?

AT REST.

IN MEMORY OF AGNES, AGED TWENTY-TWO.

GATHER white lilies, emblems of her life,
Spotless and pure, and lay them on her brow ;
She has passed upward from this restless strife,
And with the angels lifts her rare voice now !
Before her semblance left in mortal clay,
Oh, solemn gazer ! in mute reverence bow.

Silent and pale she lies, with folded hands ;
Touched is her forehead with celestial calm ;
Smiling her lips, as if the heavenly lands
Burst on her vision with their airs of balm,—
Or as she heard, through boundless arches, swell,
The diapason of some grand sweet psalm.

Utter no vain repinings o'er her clay ;
Drop on her face no useless meed of tears ;

Lay her within the conquered grave away,
And cast out all your troubles, doubts, and fears.
Why weep for one who, in the courts of heaven,
Shall dwell through all eternity's bright years?

Call her not dead, but say an angel's kiss
Has pressed her lips with tenderness and love,—
Won her pure spirit to the home of bliss,
Where with the saved her happy feet shall rove!
What better fate than to be with her God,
And with his angels in the realms above?

Ay, turn away! She is no more of earth;
But her example, deathless as the stars,
Has fallen on you at her glad new birth,
Fallen adown through the sky's purple bars.
Accept the trust, and be not sad for her
Whose palm-crowned forehead not a shadow mars.

ONE NIGHT.

I WANDERED down the moonlit woods
One calm October night,—
The very poplar-leaves hung still,
The zephyrs were so light.

The pink-tinged radiance of the sky,
Love-flushed the blazing stars,
Until my soul leaped up to break
These mortal prison bars.

The brook ran softly o'er the grass,
Impearling pebbles gray,—
The waterfall in fleecy clouds
Of mist dissolved away.

The air so calm, and cool, and clear,
I seemed to pierce the screen,
And look far up the ether voids
To heavenly pastures green.

The crimson maples cast their leaves
Low at my lingering feet,
And all the languorous atmosphere
With dying flowers was sweet.

Lone! but, oh, grand! these autumn woods!
Sad, cold and desolate!
The cast-off leaves and wan moonlight,
The brown earth tessellate.

Solemn and still,—my soul is awed!
Silence my spirit gives
For all this beauty! Here, O God,
Thy fullest presence lives!

THE CHILD'S WISHES.

OH, if I were a robin,
With breast of crimson red,
And black and shiny feathers
On my bonny, roguish head,

So high above the tree-tops,
Dear mother, I could fly,
You'd almost think me sailing up
To visit yonder sky.

Oh, if I were the south-wind,
That sings so soft and deep,
And scampers down the hillside
Among the flocks of sheep,
I'd fan the little lambkins
Through every sultry day,
And make the sweet white clover
Bloom for them all the way.

Oh, if I were the streamlet
Down in the mossy dell,
I'd sing the whole time gently
To the listening lily-bell,—
I'd water thirsty meadows,
And verdant make the grass,
And all the little sleepy flowers
Would laugh to see me pass.

Oh, if I were a daisy
In some shady wayside nook,
Where the pretty village maidens
Would pause on me to look,
I'd charm them with my fragrance
Of half their gentle love,
With my eyes so bright and starry
Lifted unto heaven above.

But if I were a robin,
Or the south-wind, soft and low,
Or the little gliding streamlet,
Or a modest daisy blow,
Mother, I could not slumber
Upon your snowy breast ;
Your kisses would not soothe me
In the night-time into rest.

So I'd rather be your darling
Than anything on earth,—
I'm happy as the happiest thing
That ever had a birth !
I'd not be bird or streamlet,
South-wind or daisy pearl ;
But let me stay here, mother dear,
And be your little girl.

PAST AND PRESENT.

WHAT has life lost of its old royal grace,
That even the flowers whisper to me of death ?
Perhaps because they laid them on his face,—
His pale, cold face they warmed not with their breath.
The musky odor, sweet to stifling pain,
Brings back that hour of mute despair again.

And, memory once aroused, how many things
Return to us we cast forth long ago !

What pain, sometimes, a flower, or sweet scent, brings
From ashes that we thought had lost all glow !
A touch, a tone, a breath,—ah, human heart !
How strangely fashioned, governed, moved, thou art !

The maple's flame that lights the autumn hills,
The wasted gold of these wild woodland ways,—
The damp, sweet, bosky vapor that distills
On purple ridges, all recall lost days ;
And cloudless sunsets do for evermore
Restore me something of the Gone Before.

There are grand gleams of an immortal life
Lying beyond this brief elapse of Time,
And our hegira from this troublous strife,
Though weakly dreaded, is a thing sublime !
To blend all Time, Space, Past, and all To Come,
Into one PRESENT in that perfect home !

BENEATH THE MOON.

UNDER the moon how the still waters gleam !
The silver is over the breast of the stream ;
The cream-white lilies droop languidly down,
In fragrance the red roses sleepily drown ;
The feathery willow-trees shimmer and shine,
The dew lies in diamonds upon the wild vine ;
The asphodel closes its nectarous cup,
The passion-flower folds its rare beauty up ;
And the scent of the thyme, and the mint, and the balm,
Floats out on the wings of the infinite calm.

The meadows lie quietly wearing the green,—
The elms to the linden-trees lovingly lean ;
The pastures are silent, the flocks are asleep,
The sturdy red oxen beside the white sheep ;
No tinkle of cow-bells, no shepherd boy's cry,
The cricket's dull songs on the sweet silence die ;
The amber-winged beetles cling fast to the trees,
The golden-green butterflies hide in the leaves ;
The bee has flown home with his burden of sweets,
And rests in the twilight from summer noon's heats.

The drowsy old farm-houses hidden away
Under hills, and in valleys, mossy and gray,
Are silent as churchyards,—the spirit of rest
Has stolen upon them and maketh them blest ;
And over the shade and the green of "Love's Lane"
The silence intensifies, e'en unto pain.
The west sky wears faintest suggestions of pink,
Like a brook when a red rose stoops over to drink ;
The forest spring murmurs a mystical tune,
And its sweet waters sparkle under the moon.

Oh, will the moon shine thus in all coming time,
And earth breathe her vague voices subtly sublime ?
The flowers burn with crimson, and purple, and blue,
The red rose be red, and the true heart be true ?
Ah ! some time in the mystical Future, we know,
We shall all pass away from the light and the glow ;
The dew-drops will glitter, like pearls in their beds,
In the damp grass that covers our low-lying heads ;
And the robins will sing through the beautiful June,
And the earth lie in love 'neath the beautiful moon.

ARNULLIN'S BRIDE.

THEY left her in the haunted room where Lady Alice
died,
In the castle where for centuries had dwelt the sons of
pride,—
The haughty race by ties of blood to royalty allied.

How the shadows lowered and thickened o'er that
lonely bridal room !
And the air of coming tempest made the windows dark
with gloom ;
And the damp old silken tapestry was odorous of the
tomb.

The night was demon-haunted ; all the Ægean spirits
woke ;
On the fire-blackened mountain cliffs the thunder
pealed and broke ;
And in the wailing of the winds a lost immortal spoke.

Around the grim old turrets the boding raven swooped,—
The night's Plutonian darkness o'er his dismal shadow
drooped ;
And the clouds, like phantom visitants, across the sky's
plain trooped.

Oh, the gloom of vaulted ceilings! oh, the gloom of
musty halls!

Did he dare to let the taper stream up the oaken walls?

Did he dare, to pause and listen to his stealthy foot-
step's falls?

A tale of blood and horror that bridal room might tell!
What dismal burden was laid down in yonder tangled
dell?

What crime was ever half so black this side the gates
of hell?

Night waned. They called her to the feast in bowers
of jessamine;

They rapped upon her bolted door, crying, vainly,
"Geraldine!

The board is spread, the master waits, and crimson is
the wine!"

They burst the bars,—an empty room! a bed as softly
white

As the great drifts the snow-king piles up on some
yule-tide night!

A silent dearth! a nuptial room shorn of its ripe delight!

They sought her far, and heralds went throughout the
country wide,

Asking of all if they had seen Arnullin's missing
bride:

But, ah! the gates of death were strong as the Earl's
regnant pride!

THE KING AND I.

THE King rules over the country;
But never a whit care I,
My little meagre dominion
Is all in my hopeful eye.
He has a million of troubles;
I am at peace with man,
I have put ill-tempered ambition
Under eternal ban:
Why should I envy royalty?
Answer me, if you can!

The Queen smiles on her courtiers,
The duke's lips press her hand;
My little wife would scorn kisses
From the noblest in the land!
Given to me her heart is,
Sacred to me her lips,—
Never dares an admirer
Press e'en her finger-tips;
And her gentle, wifely beauty
Puts the Queen in eclipse.

The King is a jovial liver,
Drinks of the rubiest wine,
Is clothed in the royal ermine
And linen matchlessly fine;
Has pages to guess his wishes,
Minions to come at his nod,

And amid his palace royalties
Rules like a demigod !
Which will lie highest and softest,
He, or I, under the sod ?

Give me my lowly cottage,
My wife and my brown-eyed girl !
One is my royal diamond,
The other my priceless pearl !
Go, King ! ride, drink, and conquer,
Joy in your birth and your pride ;
I wouldn't lift up a finger
To sit on the throne by your side !
For God and a true love have blessed me ;
What can I ask for beside ?

THE VOICE.

THERE'S a mute voice ever singing to me in the depths
of air,
I hear its plaintive breathings, soft and lonesome,
everywhere,—
By the river, on the mountain, and the moorland
ghostly bare.

Chanting, chanting, ever chanting, its solemn melody,
Like a myriad tiny pearl-shells in the deep and un
known sea,
Like a band of little fairies in a bed of rosemary.

When the purple shades of night-time steal down the
gold of day,
And the evening flames of amber make the west a
shining way,
That lone and mystic melody my spirit hears away.

'Tis a lute no mortal fingers the golden strings have
swept,
The rich voice of an oriole whose tones have always
slept,—
A moaning, sighing human voice which has forever
wept.

Across the clover meadows where they rake the new-
mown hay,
And from the azure bosom of the pulseless crystal bay,—
In the dead nights of December, in the passion noons
of May.

Full of tender, soft complaining, floating through the
amethyst,
Like a ray of summer sunshine on the evening's sombre
mist,—
Like an unplayed strain of music waiting in the wind-
harp's cyst.

Lowly, gently,—never joyous; one subdued and hal-
lowed strain,
Like the dripping on the scented leaves of fragrant
August rain,—
'Tis of *her* heavenly harp-strings the mystical refrain.

Oh, my soul it leaps and struggles like the ever-trem-
bling stars !
Beats against its clay-walled prison like the sea-waves
'gainst the bars,
Chafes like a gallant soldier prisoned in the sight of
wars !

All the world is spirit-haunted, only that we've ears of
stone ;
Calling ! calling ! ever calling ! I have ears for that
alone !
Oh, a phantom voice is calling me from shadeland's
vast unknown !

ANOTHER WORLD.

THERE are brighter skies than these, I know ;
Lands where no shadows lie,—
Fields where the flowers are always fresh,
And founts which never dry.
There are domes where the stars are never dim.
Where the moon forever gleams,
And the wind in music sweeps the hills
And ripples the crystal streams ;
For often I've caught, in time of sleep,
A gorgeous glimpse of this hidden keep,
Away in the Land of Dreams.

When Night lets down her pall of mist
On slender cords of air,

And the purple shades of the dying Day
Are teeming everywhere,
While the drowsy beetles chant their lay
In the wild field-lily's cells,
And the solemn voice of the homeless wind
Along the highland swells,
I know, by the cry of my soul within,
There's a place where they shut the gates on sin,
And the God of glory dwells !

MAY ALLONBY.

NIGHT has come down o'er the lone sea,
The wild wind has risen to frenzy,—
The spirits of Dread walk the shore,—
Across the long stretch of the quicksands,
And over the bleak, gloomy headlands,
Is heard the billows' grim roar.

Oh, angry and treacherous ocean !
Oh, "white-caps" in fiendish commotion !
Be kind to the ships in your care !
Be merciful to the bold rangers,
Who've dared all your perils and dangers,
Whose brave hearts never despair !

The fisherman's cot on the Boar's Head
Is light with the pitch-torch's blaze red,
And it streams far over the lee.

The fisherman's girl lights the beacon,
Her sweet faith the storm cannot weaken,
Nor the crash of the incoming sea.

There are wrecks on the ocean this dread night,
Far over the wave shines the blue light,
The minute-guns boom on the din.
There are brave hearts in agony toiling;
But, alas! all their wild efforts foiling,—
The mad breakers hurry them in.

Out over the sands in the morning
Men go at the first crimson dawning,—
Oh, fisherman's daughter, bewail!
Thy lover, thy true, loyal lover,
The pride of the fair town of Dover,
Was lost in yesternight's gale!

She reads on the wreck's cast up timbers
The name of the bark she remembers,—
The letters spell—MAY ALLONBY!
For he named his taut craft in her honor.
Oh, how the grief-chills creep upon her
As she thinks of him dead in the sea!

The years have gone by like a vision,
But still in a fancy Elysian
She wanders the cold Hampton sands,—
Looking out o'er the lone waste of billows,
As they toss up their foamy white pillows
And woo her with phantom white hands!

SUMMER IS GONE.

ACROSS the fields the gleaming gold
Of Autumn-time steals slow ;
The maples flush with crimson heat,
The sumachs fervid glow ;
The morning airs are damp and cool,
At night the skies are gray ;
The wild-wood silence tells the tale
That Summer's gone away.

We miss the birds that sang in June,
We miss the sweet-lipped flowers,
We miss the soft airs of the south,
We miss the long, slow hours.
These autumn days are all too short ;
Though brilliant in decay,
Their very splendor saddens us,
For Summer's gone away.

The frost-weed blossoms by the brook,
The nuts, in forest shades,
Drop one by one ; the asters pale
Hide in the woody glades ;
The mornings shorten, and the sun
Falls with a slanting ray,—
All nature tells us mournfully,
That Summer's gone away.

A BROKEN DREAM.

WE met one evening just as sunset kissed
The glowing hills to blushes burning red,—
One summer evening when the sea's gray mist
Hung thick above the rocks on Lighthouse Head ;
And warm, soft shades of amber, flecked with gold,
Played o'er the sands so cold, and white, and dead.

I can recall e'en now, though years have fled,
The very smell of clover on the breeze,—
And as I stand here breathless and alone,
The same salt scent floats to me from the seas,
And on the shore the waves press slowly up,
Breaking their hearts in music on the lees.

We parted when the dismal autumn rain
Fringed the drear hills with gray and ghostly white,
And through the leafless trees, in wordless pain,
The wind sobbed wildly to the listening night ;
And at long intervals the death-pale moon
Showed, through the clouds, a globe of sickly light.

We met and parted. Others do the same ;
And lives are shipwrecked every sunny day.
We bear the torture,—hide the rending pain,—
And show the world our faces bright and gay ;
And no one dreams the worm is at the heart
Of the sweet rose that burst to bloom in May.

No love-words spoke we, for between our souls
An icy shadow stood, ghost-like and dim,
More deadly dreadful than the sea that rolls
Up the black headlands when the tide is in !
Keeping our lives eternally apart,—
Oh, fateful Presence ! tireless, stern, and grim !

Bound to another ! Vows must not be broke !
If hearts break, let them ! Well, the world is wide ;
There lieth safety in mad words unspoke ;
Let silence seal the tomb where Hope has died !
The world would call it sin to kiss thy lips,
So here in quietude let me abide,—

Here, where the sea broadens out blue and cold
For weary leagues, to meet the southern shore,
Where in the summer sunshine's fadeless gold
Life is to thee a calm, for evermore !
And not a pale regret e'er stirs thy heart
For the brief Indian summer gone before.

Here let me stay, hoping the wind will bear,
As a sweet augury of peace, to me,
Some breath of air that has across thee blown
In that fair land beyond the purple sea,—
And that the low, melodious song of waves
May bring my soul suggestions full of thee !

CROFTEN TOWER.

I PASS it oft at nightfall,
And I think the sunset gold
Is loath to touch with kindly light
That mansion dark and old ;
And it seems as if the heavens
That hang above its roof
Are not so blue as other skies,
And further keep aloof.

The birds build not their airy nests
Within the shadowing trees ;
A dead calm holds its dreary court
Within the mouldy leaves ;
Wild roses spring where once in pride
Rare tropic blossoms grew,
But not a human eye is glad
To meet their modest hue.

The garden-walks are overgrown
With brambles and with weeds,—
Only the squirrel or the jay
On the rich fruitage feeds ;
The mellow peach and nectarine
Hang ripely from the bough,
And, all untouched, the purple grapes
The trellises endow.

Death and decay are everywhere !
The mansion once so gay
Stands lone and silent, all its pride
And glory fled away :
Its high-arched doors, and windows tall,
Are closed and locked fore'er,—
For not the poorest child of want
Would seek a dwelling there.

The schoolboy chokes his merry song,
Quickens his lagging pace,
And glances back with fearsome eye
At this deserted place ;
The weary laborer shuns the path
That passes by its door,
And takes the long and toilsome track
Across the distant moor.

I mind me of a vanished time,
When this old house was bright
With life and joy, and festive mirth
Rang out upon the night ;
When graceful forms and faces fair
Brightened the stately halls,
And lamps of gold and ormolu
Lit up the polished walls.

A dark and haughty man was he,
The master of the tower,—
The people owned for miles around
The magic of his power !

Handsome, and proud, and arrogant,
His soul self-cursed with scorn,—
They said his Spanish mother died
The night her child was born.

He wooed and won a gentle girl,
Pure as the saints above !
She gave him all her sweet young trust,
Her confidence and love ;
She glorified the tower awhile,
Like a stray sunlight beam,—
Then pallid grew ; her face lost light,
Her eye its happy gleam.

One dreary night, when tempests roared,
And thunder shrieked in pain,
And sheets of livid lightning flashed
Their flame-tongues through the rain,—
Red blood was spilt ! a right to Heaven
One weary soul had won !
But ah ! the other ? God be just !
When there's a murder done !

He lived unpunished ; but he died
In torments none can tell !
The anguish of his tortured soul
A foretaste was of hell.
His own hand cut the thread of life
At last ; and all alone
Through the dark Silence he went forth,
Forth to the dread Unknown.

The tower is left to solitude,—
But oft, on stormy nights,
The awe-struck people say the windows
Blaze with festive lights ;
And sometimes on the murky air
Rings out a wailing dirge,
Like the sea's moaning when it bears
Dead men upon its surge.

THE SONG OF THE FACTORY.

Toil from morning till night,
Toil at the clattering loom !
With never a kindly word to light
The blank and dusty room !
Work, with a breaking heart,
And a weary, bursting brain !
Work, while the dried-up tear-drops start,
Then sink to their bed again,—
Oh ! heart, and head, and soul, going mad
With the hunger-gnawing pain.

Toil for the meagre sake
Of cheating Death of his right !
Toil lest the faithful shears of Fate
Sever the warp of life !
Dust, and darkness, and gloom,
Noise, and bustle, and roar !

Cobwebs curtain the dusky room,—
Filthiness carpets the floor ;
While all day long with the ceaseless toil
My heart is growing sore.

Blighting my young life's morn !
Hanging its sky with a shroud,—
Never dare I think of a dawn
Unhid in a dismal cloud !
Why not summon up death ?
What is life here below ?
What is a faint and flickering breath,
To balance this wearing woe ?
Oh, God ! oh, God ! shall I bear it still ?
Or, before Thou call'st me, *go* ?

Ah ! my sister's pallid face
Is holding me ever back !
I dare not shiver life's crystal vase
And step from the thorny track !
For I hear her moaning cries,—
Her hungry cries for bread,—
And to death and rest I close my eyes,
And ply my shuttle and thread ;
For she would suffer, and die of want,
Were I with the blessed dead.

Oh for one little hour
Amid the fresh green grass !
To smell the balmy wild field flower,
And watch the shadows pass,—

Just as I used to do
Ere life a burden seemed,
Ere Hope's star faded on my view
And the hours with anguish teemed ;
Alas ! 'alas ! of this pent-up life
My childhood never dreamed !

Toil for a hard, dry crust,
With hand that never lags,—
Coining my very soul to dust
For a bed of squalid rags !
For a shelter over my head,
A rickety, leaking roof,—
Where the very swallows with looks of dread
Keep from the eaves aloof,—
And the sunbeams hardly deign to weave
Their golden-fingered woof !

Clang ! clang ! from the belfry tall,
'Tis the welcome evening bell !
Cold, weary hearts leap at the call,
The call they know so well ;
To rest !—ah, name misgiven !
Rest, with a breaking heart ?
There is no rest this side of heaven,
No rest till the soul depart !
Oh, who would live to suffer and bear
Grim Poverty's bitter smart ?

And it's home to my scanty fare,
And home to my hovel drear :—
Oh, will God's angels ever care
To hover my dwelling near ?

I close my eyes to sleep,
But there is no rest within !
I turn and twist on my hard straw heap,
Like a child of crime and sin !—
For it's ever ringing in my ears,
The Factory's hateful din !

MY SUITORS.

I HAVE two suitors for my kindly grace,—
The one a farmer's boy, with hard, brown hands ;
The other is a high-born English earl,
With stately castles on his wide-spread lands.
My Lord Eugene has a fair classic face,—
And pearls and gold lace all his robes bestrew ;
While Charlie has an honest sunburnt cheek,
And wears a private's uniform of blue :
I do not think I ought to care for both,—
Do you ?

Both say they love me ; both are very kind ;
Eugene will shield me from all care and strife ;
Charlie will give me all his warm true heart,
And I shall be a Union soldier's wife.
Eugene will never leave me,—so he says ;
But soon to Charlie I must say adieu,
And think of him upon the dang'rous field,
And lie awake to pray the whole night through !
He may come back no more,—I'll not be cold,—
Would you ?

I saw Eugene in furious anger once,
 Beating his horse till every quivering limb
Of the proud beast hardened to sinewy steel,
 And the deep eyes flashed lightning back to him !
Charlie's white mare knows not the coward whip !
 He feeds her with red clover wet with dew,—
I smooth her mane, soft as Italia's silk,
 And, loving her, think of her master too !
I could not trust the man who beats his horse,—
 Could you ?

Welcome ! soft summer night ! ablaze with stars !
 Flushed rosy with the lang'rous smile of day !
Welcome ! warm breezes that have swept through groves
 Of orange-trees, around some southern bay !
Anchored, my heart's at rest ! a calm supreme
 Fills me with voiceless peace, so strangely new,
I almost fear to hold and make it mine,
 Lest it should vanish like the morning dew !
I do not think I shall regret the Earl,—
 Do you ?

OUT IN THE COLD.

THE hoarse winds whistle, and bluster by,
 The heavens are frigid and gray,—
The foam-white river washes the sands,—
 The sea-waves beat in the bay,
And the dim sad rain is drowning the sun,
 The sun at the noon of day.

I sit in the firelight crimson and warm,
With luxury circling me round,
The soft silk of India, the velvets of France,
Fall over me, sweeping the ground,—
The dropping of fountains in crystalline cups
Woos peace with its musical sound.

But I shiver and shudder at every breath
Of the wind as it passes by !
My hand reaches out for one other hand,—
And my lips are stifling a cry !
A cry for the Lost,—the idolized Lost !
The Lost in the voids of the sky !

Out in the terrible cold she lies,—
Out in the pitiless rain !
Houseless and homeless,—she whom I loved
So deeply that loving was pain !
What had she done that she must be smitten ?
Oh ! but repinings are vain.

Heaven be merciful ! Heaven be kind !
While I am young I am old !
With weary ponderings over her fate,
Lying without in the cold !—
Lying so pallid,—Lost ! Lost ! Lost !
Out in the bitter cold !

TRIFLES.

LITTLE streamlet, murmur
On thy quiet way,—
Down in lowland meadows
Kiss the crowfoot gay ;
Refresh the thirsty cattle,
Cool the reaper's brow,—
Lave the hazel bushes
Which the ripe nuts bow,—
All thy course with humble gifts,
Little stream, endow.

Red-lipped, blushing daisy,
Pride will pass thee by,—
But thy modest sweetness
Draws the thoughtful eye ;
Cast thy fragrant odors
On the soft south breeze,
Touch the brow of beauty,
Scent the clover seas,—
Make a feast of honey
For the toiling bees.

White cloud, sail the azure,
'Mid the crystal stars,—
Drop thy graceful shadow
Through the amber bars ;

Gather strength and moisture,
Let the rain come down
Pearly, pure, and heavenly,
On the dusty town,—
All the drought-parched country
With the rich flood drown.

Sweet west wind, steal softly
Down the royal heights
In the drowsy daytime,
In the star-bright nights.
Waft thy balm of healing
Over lonely moors,—
In at palace windows,
In at cottage doors;
Give the toiling millions
Health from thy full stores.

Soul, with nature humble,
Guard thy talent small;
Stay thy feet on virtue,
Take heed lest they fall.
Cheer the sad and weary,—
Lend a helping hand,—
God loves an earnest worker
Who heeds the wise command,
To let his light shine broadcast
O'er the gracious land.

MARION.

SHE passed away,
Like a fair star "lost on the brow of day ;"
Like the echo of laughter sweet and gay,
Like the perfume which died out yesterday ;
 As evening's silver dissipates day's gold,
 As the sweet music of a tale oft told,
 As the red clouds that round the mountain fold
 Are changed to gray,—
 She passed away.

She passed away,
Like the soft sunshine of an autumn day,
Like the mist-wreaths from off a sunlit bay,
Like the light footsteps of a woodland fay ;
 As the bright rainbow spanning the dark sky,
 As thistle-down when stormy winds are high,—
 As the hope-light, born in a weary eye,
 Flees at grief's stay,
 She passed away.

THE DRUNKARD'S WIFE.

Loud roar the winds, the cutting ice-bolts fall,
The whirling snow is borne along the air;
The dark pine-trees shriek to the wind's wild call,
And writhe like conquered giants in despair.

Cold, by the fireless hearth, a mother kneels,
Clasps to her breast a hunger-dying child!
The life-blood in her veins with cold congeals,—
Starvation glitters in her dark eye wild.

“O God!” she cries,—“O God! look on my child!
Sweet Heaven, have pity! My poor darling spare!
To die! to die! those lips that on me smiled!
To wither in the grave-mould this brow fair.

“Black gloom and darkness! chillier grows the night!
The midnight bell has tolled! *he* is not here!
He lingers o'er the wine-cup red and bright,—
Unmindful that the morning draweth near.

“My babe! how cold! my tears freeze on thy cheek,
So pinched with want, I turn from it away!
Hark! hear the rushing of the north wind bleak!
No food,—no fire,—to cheer the coming day!

“Oh, loved ! and lost ! oh that he'd turn and flee,—
Flee from the monster ere his doom is fixed !
Cursed be the wine-cup ! thrice accursed be he
Who for his fellow-man hath poison mixed !

“My child ! oh, Heaven send pity from above !
He turns upon me such strange wistful eyes ;
I press his lips, with all my deep strong love,—
Striving to hold him back from Paradise.

“In vain ! the angels call ! oh, cruel Death !
My husband ! Come ! he's dying,—he,—our own !
One feeble sigh,—gone is the fluttering breath !
Great God ! 'tis o'er, and I am all alone.

“My darling one ! my beautiful ! my bright !
Gone home ere sorrow in thy breast was born,—
I follow thee,—I see the beckoning light
On heavenly shores ! I go to greet the Morn.”

Wild the cold winds roared on ; the drifting snow
Wove for the mother and her babe a shroud ;
The drunkard lingered in the wine's red glow,
Where on the air fell laughter long and loud.

The eastern heavens blushed with rosiest light,
The crimson day across the Orient broke ;
In the calm land where faith is changed to sight,
The mother and her angel child awoke.

THE MARCH OF LIFE.

WITH noiseless tread the fleeting years go by,
And leave but memories of their griefs and joys ;
And life's gay vanities we prize so high,
When looking back, are valueless as toys. —

Oh, lapse of time ! oh, days forever fled !
Oh, youth and gladness passed for evermore !
Oh, fond, sweet hopes that lie so cold and dead,
And strewn like wrecks, along life's rugged shore !

Once, all the world was bathed in rosy light,
The future hid itself in golden haze,—
Mornings of perfect beauty burst from night
And lost themselves in glow of heavenly days.

We stood beside life's sea, and felt no chill ;
The tides leaped up in music on the sands ;
We heard no cries of lost souls break the still,—
We saw no beckoning gleam of dead white hands.

Ah, well ! we live and suffer ! love and lose ;
Graves of our dead are green along the way ;
And as we near the twilight shades and dews,
We find it is December, and not May.

God grant us Faith, and unto it we'll cling !
Faith which accepts all things as for the best ;
Which looks for death only to bring some change,
Some pleasant change, and trusts Him for the rest.

SUMMER.

SUMMER on the mountains,
Where the heather blows ;
Summer in the fountains,
Where the water flows,—
Bend the clouds in shadow
O'er the rocky height,
Sunshine in the meadow
With the clover white ;
All the earth's a picture,
Made of shade and light.

Children pick the berries
All along the leas,—
Pluck the blood-red cherries
From the drooping trees,—
Chase the nimble squirrel
Over hill and brae,
Put the calm in peril
With their laughter gay ;
Scatter wide the clover smell
From the new-mown hay.

At the hush of even,
Glow the silver stars,
Through the purple heaven's
Soft empyrean bars ;
On the shore the billows
Break their melodies,
While the snow-winged vessels
Shiver in the breeze,—
God ! thy living Spirit
Stands upon the seas.

THE PAST.

THE Past ! I would not make it dead !
Its glories I would keep,
Though they be like the empty dreams
That haunt me in my sleep.
I would not have the splendor fade
That gleams across lost days,
Like the red brilliance of the light
Left on the sunset ways.

I would not pluck the lotus leaf,
Though it might heal the pain
That thrills me, often, when I touch
Some link in Memory's chain ;
Nor would I dip in Lethean wave,
Though it were crystal clear,—
It might destroy some tender thought
That makes me quiet here.

The sharp experience that Time gives,
We greatly profit by ;
'Tis well to keep remembrances
Of all our errors nigh,—
Perhaps 'twill help us to forgive
The wrongs that others do,
To bear in mind, while blaming them,
That we are guilty too.

And then, there are such pleasant things
Connected with the Past,
That o'er the whole of life's rough track
A glow of light they cast !
Touches, and tones, and tender thrills,
Caresses lost fore'er ;
But still they give suggestions dim
Of what *might* have been here.

LOOKING BEYOND.

WHAT is there in the summer air to-night
That minds me of a sweet day long o'erpast ?
What is there in this waning mellow light
That brings old memories to me thick and fast ?

Is it the scent of purple heliotrope,
That steals up to me from the garden-bed ?
Or the white clover on the meadow slope ?
Or the lush strawberries glowing ripe and red ?

Oh, Life ! oh, Death ! oh, mystic veil of sense;
That stretches 'tween this world and that to come !
Will that life be sufficient recompense
For what we suffer here in silence dumb ?

Our deepest sorrows never can be told !
Our ghastliest wounds we cover up from sight !
The griefs that make our youthful brows grow old
Are those we hide in silence and in night.

I wonder if the dead have hope, or thought,
For us who sorrow on in mortal clay !
I wonder if their heavenly lives have brought
Them so much joy, they never look away—

Away to earth ! where those they loved are still
Breasting the stormy waves of adverse fate,
Looking, with eyes so mutely pitiful,
For the unfolding of the golden gate.

I grow so weary, sometimes, it would be
Sweet as a mother's kiss upon my brow,
To know that those who've crossed the Unknown Sea,
Those whom I loved, have pity for me now ;

To know that when I sorrow they look down
With tender eyes from Immortality,—
To know that those who wear a fadeless crown
In heaven's glory, still have care for me.

HUMILITY.

THERE is a little river
Down below the meadow-land,
Where the ripples beat in music
On the snowy, pebbled sand,
And the foam from tiny rapids
Glistens like a spirit hand.

There are no wondrous cataracts
To win a nation's gaze,
No cruel, treacherous eddies,
No wild and devious ways ;
But the sweet river waters fields,
And gladdens lonely braes.

There frowns not on its borders
The castle of a king ;
But down in shady valleys,
Where bells of cattle ring,
They say the little river
Is a kind and blessed thing.

No hoary, stately cypresses,
Crowned with clinging mistletoe,
Lean o'er the quiet waters,
Or are mirrored in their flow ;
And yet the river's power is felt
In ocean's undertow.

And a single word of kindness,
Spoken to a heart that's cold,
May be priceless as the jewels
Which princes wore of old !
For a little smile of charity
Is better than fine gold.

MY LITTLE LADY IN BLUE.

My Little Lady in Blue !
I follow her down the street,
And look in the sand for the dainty print,
The winsome print of her feet,—
Feet so charmingly, cunningly fleet,—
Gaiters but number two !
My heart leaps up at sound of her step,
And beats a noisy tattoo !
Airiest, fairest, sweetest, and best !
My Little Lady in Blue.

Cheeks like the roses of Spain !
Hair in ringlets of gold,—
Tossing and waving at every step,
Billows of sunlight unrolled !
Hands like the fluttering leaf of a lily,
Graceful, stainless in hue,
White, aristocratic, small hands,
Shared by the favored few !
Never were hands, in all the wide world,
Like those of My Lady in Blue !

Singing birds, in the trees,
Chant their merriest song
When this little witch of a girl
Comes lightly tripping along !
Would I were the balmy west wind !
I'd sail the purple voids through,
And rest in the shadow made by her curls,
And taste of her crimson lips' dew ;
And the envying world should look on me
And My Little Lady in Blue !

IN THE SNOW.

SILENT the world lies 'neath a steel-blue sky ;
The winds are still in the old creaking pines,—
The oak-tree lifts its brawny arms on high,
Crowned and festooned by cream-white flowering
vines.

The English poplar stands up grim and brown,
A patriarchal giant bravely bold,
With long white hair, and royal ermine gown,
Like some Lord Magistrate in times of old.

The gate-posts, tipped and plumed like grenadiers,
Stand sentinels in silence stern and grave ;
The knotted well-sweep its gaunt length uprears,
Chiselled, and carved, a marble architrave.

The well is lost,—the road is blotted out ;
Waist-high, the drifts shut in the farm-house door ;
The brushy woodpile has been put to rout,
Subdued and shrouded, it is seen no more.

Crystal stalactites hang from all the eaves,
The clapboard nails rejoice in silver tips ;
Curtains of lace, with pearl-embroidered leaves,
Wrap all the windows in their pale eclipse.

Twigs that were only poor sticks yesterday
To-night's magician into pearls has turned ;
The spruces wear the soft robes of a fay,
The pines a right to diamond sprays have earned.

The grape-vine arbor boasts its ivory bars ;
The trellises with icy cones are bright ;
The hawthorn hedge is flecked with glittering stars,
And all the garden's stately flowers are white.

The brook has closed its song and gone to sleep
Beneath its coverlet of fleecy white ;
The smothered river, rolling dark and deep,
Is mute and silent as the dumb-mouthed Night.

There is a hush o'er all things that we view ;
A dead white silence rests on all below ;
The pale moon slowly sails the dark clouds through,—
Below, the earth is buried in the snow.

DEAD AND ALIVE.

THERE'S a vague and terrible something, to-night,
Abroad in the depths of the air,—
Its ghost-like breath is cold on my face,
Its fingers are cold in my hair;
I stand on the headland barren and bleak,
And strain my eyes through the dark,
And I see but the surges toss wearily up
And break on the pebble-strewn arc,—
The arc of the cape, where the lighthouse gleams,
A blood-red, tremulous spark.

What do I look for, coming to me,—
To me, from the waste of the seas?
Orient gems, sweet-smelling spices, and silks,
Breast-high in the slow argosies?
What are jewels and odors to me,—
A regnant queen in my pride?
What do I care if the merchant-ships
Are tossed on the treacherous tide?
They are not with my fortune, or with my thoughts,
By the frailest tenure allied.

I wonder—I'm full of wonder, to-night—
If the mist that is rolling down
Would choke the mortal cries of a soul,—
A soul that the ocean would drown?

I wonder if men, when they struggle for life
In the sinuous arms of the sea,
Have leisure to think while sinking down, down,
To think of the fearful To-Be?
I wonder if *he*, should he perish to-night,
Would cast back a thought after me?

Through the rain, and the spoon-drift, I fancy I see
The ghastly white form of a ship,—
I hear the strain of the cordage aloft,
And the cutwater's laboring clip,—
Only a moment,—the vision is gone;
I hear but the wind sweep the shore,
And see but the death-cold gray of the fog,
And the billows toss up as before;
But the cry of a drowning, agonized soul
Will ring in my ears evermore!

I know it! I feel it here in my breast!
Gone down in the horrible deep!
Uncoffined, unknelled,—no kiss on his lips
To reconcile him to his sleep!
To lie in unquiet for ages to come,
While I must exist as I be!
Be pitiful of me, sweet saints in Heaven,
Death in life compasses me!
My Thought and my Breath walk lonesomely here,
And my Heart lies buried at sea.

STARS OF NIGHT.

THE shades have come, they rest on wood and field,
The day is gone, and vanished is the light ;
The purple skies a faint, soft splendor yield,
Illumined by the glowing stars of night.

In the dim gray of evening it is sweet
To wander o'er the fields, with dew-drops bright,
Lingering along where leap the brook's lithe feet,
Gazing upon the glorious stars of night.

Come, Night ! I love thy quiet, hallowed still !
There is no gloom in thy dark wings to me ;
Grandeur and awe, my soul can drink its fill
Of thy majestic, vast sublimity.

Roll on, fair stars, in beauty grand, sublime,
Your matchless forms half hid from mortal sight !
Singing fore'er those unheard, heavenly chimes
Which reach to God ! ye glorious stars of night.

IT COMETH.

It cometh ! the day after night-time,
The sunshine after the rain,
The golden sky after a tempest,
Happiness after sharp pain :
Then lift up thy head, silly weeper,
And take up thy burden again.

There's a hope-star gleaming and glowing,
Though hid in a vapory mist ;
There's a beautiful pinnaced city
Away in the blue amethyst ;
And the mountains burst out of shadow
When their brows by sunshine are kissed.

Men level the oak of the forest,
But the roots remain in the earth,
They clamor for newer existence,
And spring to strong second birth ;
And 'tis thus with a fortune-crushed mortal,
Whose soul has the true royal worth.

The best steel has most refining,
Gold is assayed by hot fire ;
And the heart is oft tried by the wrecking
Of passion, and hope, and desire ;
But the wind which will conquer a sparrow
But makes an eagle soar higher.

Then cast off the fetters of fortune,
Nor bow to fate's autocrat nod !
And scorn to walk tamely the pathway
A craven-souled million have trod :
Be worthy thy glorious destiny,
Man, made in the image of God !

MY LOVE.

THOU hast a lone, dark corner in my heart,
To me unknown !
I've never dared to fathom the dim depth,
Lest it be stone ;
And yet, I know, my soul's most sacred thoughts
Live there alone.

I know not if I'd love thy clasping arm,
Or thy lips' kiss,—
I never linger near to catch thy smile,
Lest it be bliss ;
And would I risk to drink of perfect joy
In world like this ?

Often, at midnight, a wild longing comes
And seizes me ;
Fervid, intense, and strong, it folds me round,
And then I long to be
In some unpeopled, trackless desert waste,
Alone fore'er with THEE.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

HE sat on the lofty highlands,
Or climbed to the eagle's nest ;
Wore the mountain rose in his helmet,
The chamois skin on his breast ;
He laughed at the vivid lightning,
Shrank not at the thunder's roar ;
And his dark eye flashed when the wild sea-waves
Burst on the frightened shore.

She was a meek-eyed woman ;
She lingered in lowly vales,
And gathered the dew-wet daisies
That grew in the sunny dales ;
She trembled when raged the tempest,
And paled at the angry sea ;
For her soul was attuned to the low, soft strains
Of Love's sweet melody.

He fought for the love of conquest,
Was first in the battle's brunt ;
He bore down the mail-clad warriors,
Like deer in the forest hunt ;
And they crowned his brow with laurel,
Thundered his fame to the world,
And wrote his name, in letters of fire,
On the flag his valor unfurled.

Her life was a calm, flowing river,
Going ever pleasantly on ;
Her world was the cottage, and meadow,
Walled in by the blue horizon ;
She soothed every heart that was weary,
And kissed off the tears of the sad,—
Oh, many a spirit that good woman made
Rise up from grief and be glad.

He died, as dieth the hero,
Unflinching, fearless, and brave !
Defying the waiting death-angel,
Defying the deep hungry grave !
She died, as the soft summer sunset
Goes out o'er the hills of the west,
Put her hands in the hands of her Saviour,
And leaned her head on His breast.

Oh, who, in the time that approacheth,
Shall mete out to each the reward ?
Which one has done best with the talents
Vouchsafed by the hand of the Lord ?
Will *he* wear the crown of the conqueror ?
Will *her* brow be bound with joy's glow ?
Will *he*, or *she*, gain the true happiness ?
Ah ! who that is mortal may know ?

THE OLD BARN.

RICKETY, old, and crazy,
Shingleless, lacking some doors ;
Bad in the upper story,
Wanting boards in the floors ;
Cobwebs over the rafters,
Ridge-pole rotten and gray,
Hanging in helpless impotence
Over the mows of hay.

Oh, how I loved the shadows
That clung to the silent roof !
Day-dreams wove with the quiet
Many a glittering woof !
I climbed to the highest cross-beam,
Watched the swallows at play,
Admired the knots in the boarding,
And rolled in billows of hay.

Roughly the winds tore round it,
Winds of a stormy day,—
Scattering the fragrant hay-seed,
Whirling the straws away !
Streaming in at the crannies,
Spreading the clover smell,
Changing that dark old granary
Into a flowery dell.

EARLY FANCIES.

A LITTLE child I loved the night,
The purple twilight sky,—
The yellow moon hung like a lamp
Up in the arched dome high ;
And when June's sunshine kissed the hills,
Played on the clover slopes,
I said the stars were coming down
To earth on silver ropes.

In the lone autumn of the year,
I watched through window bars
The last faint crimson fade away
Before the brightening stars ;
And then I feared the angels' cheeks
Were paling at some grief ;
I thought, perhaps they, too, bemoaned
The "sere and yellow leaf."

Winter came on, with glory nights
Of Northern skies aflame :
My childish heart was awed by these,
And trembled at their name !
For then, I thought, the great, good God,
From His bright home on high,
Was angry at my many sins,
So burnt the midnight sky.

But lovely spring-time, dressed in flowers,
Blushed o'er the happy earth ;
My soul arose ! my spirit woke
To a thrice nobler birth !
When I looked up to the mild skies,
I deemed myself forgiven,
And through the mist I almost saw
The pearly gates of Heaven.

FALSE.

I MET him yesterday, down by the sea,
Stood for a moment with his hand on mine ;
Heard once again his soft voice speak to me,
And the hot blood fired up my cheeks like wine,—
In memory I went back to that sweet time
When life was all divine !

Once, when I met him, through his deep, dark eyes
Shone out the brilliance of a tender glow,—
Lighting his face as sunset lights the skies
When its encrimsoned glories ebb and flow !
Last night his eyes were steel, so hard and dense,
His smile was frozen snow.

We dwell apart,—our paths are severed wide ;
We hold no more those precious twilight talks,

When in love's perfectness, close, side by side,
We wandered down the labyrinthine walks
Of those old woods, where now the lonesome wind
In gloomy grandeur stalks.

Once, I loved moonlight ; loved those still Fall nights,
When radiant amber filled the atmosphere,—
When the arched sky burned red with Northern Lights,
And earth seemed listening with a half-fledged fear.
I loved all things because I worshiped *him*,
And he was ever near.

Now, I shut out all pleasant sights, and close,
With firm cold hands, my curtains 'gainst the stars ;
And bar my windows, lest my stern repose
Be stirred by sound of love-songs and guitars ;—
Would that I had the power to close my heart
With treble bolts and bars !

I know him false ! I scorn him ! *so I say* ;
I would not look upon his face again !
With me all love and trust have had their day,
I've done with sweet young faith and hope ; but then,
He whom a woman once has loved can never be,
To her, like other men.

FROM NATURE UNTO GOD.

THE wind that sweeps the fragrant waste
Of billowy clover seas,
And breathes its mystic music through
The greenery of the trees ;
The summer sun that drops its gold
On hill and plain and sea,
The cooling shadows as they pass
So still and noiselessly,—
All these familiar sights and sounds
Are beautiful to me.

The far blue hills that in the haze
Of distance fade away,
The fleecy white clouds, mountain-born,
That love at home to stay ;
The stretch of mellow purple sky
Arching in peace o'er all,—
Building between the earth and heaven
A thin dividing wall,—
So thin that God can hear our prayers
And answer when we call :

All these delightful things I love,
Of earth, and sky, and air ;
They fill my soul with images
Of light divinely fair !

If such is earth beneath the curse
Of lust, and pride, and sin,
Earth where the threatening power of death
Throughout all time has been,—
What must be heaven, where naught of this
Can ever enter in?

In all these gracious works I see
God's mercy and His care ;
The world holds no place so remote
His love cannot reach there.
I cannot stray so far away
Prayer will not find His ear ;
In every place I know and feel
His strengthening Presence near ;
And if He loves and cares for me,
What cause have I for fear ?

SOMETHING LOST.

WHAT is it that I miss these long drear nights,
When the bleak winds against my casement blow,
And o'er the grim, gaunt outline of the heights
Comes down the ghostly mistiness of snow ?
I do not dread the wind ; I'm sheltered warm ;
Before me roars the fire, the lamp burns clear ;
What is there in this cruel winter storm
To mind me of that sweet, long-vanished year ?
When life was young, and all the world
Was dear ?

Backward in thought I go ; the windows shriek,
And down the chimney roars the frenzied blast !
I hold my breath,—is it a dead voice speaks
From out the sacred silence of the Past ?
The gate swings back and forth, I hear it grate,
Its iron hinges hoarse with age and rust ;
How often there I've paused, to watch, and wait,
The sound of feet that lie within the dust !
So long ago, when I took all things bright
In trust !

The mad winds bellow like the ocean waves,
Through the great elm-trees just across the street :
Why does the sound bring to me thoughts of graves
On bleak, bare moorlands, where the cold storms
beat ?
I lift the curtains, and peer through the gloom,—
A grim, gray waste of country,—nothing more !
My soul is prisoned in this mortal tomb,
It chafes and frets like waves on a lee shore !
Why is it that our yearnings reach so strong for what
Comes nevermore ?

AFTER THE RAIN.

THE sable clouds break into light,
To let the sunshine through ;
Above the ridge of western hills
There is a belt of blue,

And through the fleecy veil of mist
The sun bursts into view.

The wide fields stretch toward the sea,
Fragrant with clover scent ;
The lilacs and the appleblooms
In one sweet mass are blent,
And in the east a bow of Hope
Climbs toward the firmament.

The brooks leap down the rocky steeps,
White as the winter snow,—
Their dreamy voices singing us
Airs of the long ago ;
And blood-red on the garden wall
The damask roses glow.

Upon the elm-tree by the well,
The robin calls his mate,—
Who with her swelling amber breast
Coquettes upon the gate :
Poor little robin ! he, like us,
Must be content to wait.

Below the meadows in the grove,
The sweetly subtle still
Is broken by the plaintive voice
Of a lone whip-poor-will ;
And harshly sounds from up the stream
The whistle of the mill.

The air is soft, and bland, and moist,
Coming from some south shore,—

It scatters diamonds from the trees,
Such as queens never wore ;
And stealing softly comes the night !—
Night ! and the rain is o'er.

NEARER.

ONE sweet and precious thought
Comes to me every night,
When dying day flushes the west
With blood-red gleams of light ;
I'm nearer to the perfect life,
Nearer the great To-Be,—
Nearer the night when peace shall come !
Nearer, my love, to thee !

The winter's cruel cold
Sweeps o'er thy graveyard bed ;
The white snow hovers tenderly
O'er thy unconscious head ;
But peace and calm drop on my heart
With each declining sun,
For then, I think, 'twill not be long
Before we shall be one.

Through toil of hand and brain,
And heaviness of heart,—
Through all these long-drawn years
Since we have been apart,—

At each pale twilight's fall
Along the woodlands dim,
Some spirit-voice has whispered me,
"A day's length nearer him!"

Oh, Loved! and Lost! I wait,
And dream of the To-Come!
In faith I'm trusting Death to bring
Me to my one dear home.
And in the golden glow
Upon that summer shore,
We shall clasp hands, to live and love
Through all Forevermore.

MOONRISE.

A HALO crowns the purple hills,
The heaven in slumberous light distils,
Nature is still, a holy calm
On pulseless wings drops down its balm.

On azure seas cloud-vessels sail,
Their white wings flushed with roses pale;
And on the star-gemmed eastern heights
The night her bridal taper lights.

The whip-poor-will in ancient trees
Chants low his sacred melodies,
And from the swell of green uplands
The west wind utters its commands.

The lake's soft breast of waveless glass
Is kissed by shadows as they pass ;
The great hills lift their regal brows,
Like priests at vespers making vows.

The Orient bright and brighter burns,
The primrose tint to crimson turns ;
A flash of silver, touched with gold,
Leaps up the sky-steeps, fold on fold.

And, lo ! in state, like thronéd queen,
Through sable distance swims serene
The royal moon, while in their cars
Of gold ride on the glittering stars.

IN RUIN.

It stands there on the green hillside,
Covered with roses like a bride ;
And round its chimneys tall elm-trees
Whisper their vows, and shake their leaves,—
A low brown house, with windows tall,
And gables where quaint shadows fall.

The lily blooms, and mottled pinks
Crowd round the ruined fountain's brinks,
Kissing decay with crimson lips,—
Putting the gloom in gay eclipse ;
But no fair hands of happy girls
Gather the flowers to deck their curls.

I cross the sill, and sit me down
Upon the doorstep bare and brown ;
I call aloud,—a gentle word,—
Name of a sweet-voiced singing-bird :
Where dwells she now ? What regions hold
Her, with her hair of living gold ?

I call, and listen ; empty sounds,
From empty halls and empty grounds,
Grate on the air, and fright the ears
Like tones the pale death-watcher hears,
And the red robin, with a cry,
Flies startled up against the sky.

Three tombstones out 'neath yonder tree,—
One coral grave deep in the sea,—
A nameless mound in Indian lands !
Oh, sleep of heart ! oh, rest of hands !
Oh, winter's rest, where Death is king,
Waiting the resurrection Spring !

A MEMORY OF WINTER.

ALL day, in flakes of saintly white,
The snow fell down ;
Wrapping in ermine folds the height
Above the town ;
Hanging each patient hemlock-tree
With bridal veils ;

Changing the forest to a sea
Flecked with white sails.

Over each savage, black-browed rock,
Climb crystal flowers,—
Wild lily-cup, and holly-hock,
From winter's bowers ;
And on the hillside, by the spring,
Rise pillared fanes,
Gorgeous enough for reigning king
And all his thanes.

A silence steals upon the earth ;
The snow-mists flee ;
The winds wake unto stronger birth
Their minstrelsy ;
Their organ bass on high they shriek
Through the cold sky,
Rending the dismal silence bleak
With their wild cry.

Forth from their prisons peep the stars,
Like frightened girls
When battle-smoke round brave hussars
Its red fog curls ;
And wildly on the sky's broad plain
The cloud-forms reel,
Like men when cannon's deadly rain
Breaks coats of steel.

Eastward the troop of gloom-black clouds
Take up their march ;

Seeming like dismal funeral shrouds
 On heaven's arch ;
Building above the shuddering world
 A cenotaph,
Writing on scroll of blue unfurled
 God's autograph.

Cold, cold the icy wind comes down
 From Northern moors,
Frightening the stray birds feathered brown,—
 Hark ! how it roars !
Tumbling the restless, feathery snow
 To swelling hills ;
Filling the air with frosty glow.
 And frozen chills.

The moonlight silent as the dead,
 And ghostly white,
Sinks down through weird and frosty void,
 Down, in the night,
Dropping upon the river's breast
 A mail of pearl,
On each still wave a diamond crest
 Fit for an earl.

The mountain cliffs crash wide apart,
 With deafening sound ;
And up the answering echoes start
 From all around ;
The fierce winds with their bellowings strive,
 Making high boasts,
Until the whole earth seems alive
 With noisy ghosts.

The regal Night tramps grandly on,
The still stars' flame ;
And high in heaven the cold, calm moon
Shines on, the same ;
Pallid and white the great earth lies,—
A conquered thing,—
Submissive to the stern decrees
Of Winter-King.

TWO SEASONS OF LIFE.

WE were children together, he and I:
Oh, beautiful morning! oh, rare, sweet sky!
We roamed together through wood and field,
We drank the honey the wild bees yield ;
We crushed the buttercup under our tread,
And its gold dust gilded the daisy's bed ;
We sat through sunsets rich and rare,
With our faces lifted, our brown heads bare,
To catch the glory that rippled down
Over the meadow, and river, and town.

We watched the Tuscany roses bloom ;
We breathed the hyacinth's faint perfume ;
We trampled the clover so lush and sweet,
To find where the strawberries hid from the heat ;
And up on the swell of the breezy hills,
We sat through the subtle twilight stills ;

And the night-bird sang in the lonesome swamp,
And the full moon lit her blood-red lamp,
And the purple flush of the dear dead day
Faded out of the west, and left it gray.

When the stars came out in the hazy sky,
And the katydid's voice rose clear and high,
And the cricket chirped in the hawthorn hedge,
And the musical river ran o'er the sedge,
And the mist rose white as the winter snow,
And the elms in the breeze swayed to and fro,
We sat together, and hand in hand
We traveled in fancy all dreamland ;
Laid gorgeous plans for the coming time,
When the world would be perfect, and life sublime.

We said we would cross the Eastern seas,
Smell India's spices and Araby's breeze ;
Talk love together beneath the palms,
Hear Italy's daughters sing vesper psalms ;
See sunsets fade from Alpine heights,
From dismal Norway see Northern Lights ;
Climb sacred Sinai, and there, in awe,
Behold the land which the prophet saw,
And by Jerusalem's ruined towers
Deplore the wreck of her golden hours.

Oh, 'twas delicious ! the rich plantain grew,
And the creamy bananas were wet with the dew ;
The amber oriole flashed through the flowers,
And the bulbul sang in the orange bowers,

And beneath the silver light of the stars
We heard the tinkle of soft guitars ;
Oh, the royal midnights ! the calm, sweet days !
Oh, the languorous noons and the twilight haze !
And the waves rippled lightly of that south sea,
And life was an Eden to him and to me !

Ah ! it is over ! this world is so cold !
The sunsets are sable ! I miss the red gold !
The airs that sweep o'er me are chilly and damp,
The winds o'er the dead leaves relentlessly tramp !
The universe holds, for me, only a grave,
Where the pale lilies bloom, and the green willows
wave !

I care not for southlands, or orange, or palm,
I am heedless of Italy's breezes of balm ;
For me all the light of this earth is so dim !
Heaven would not be Heaven if absent from *him*.

ONE OF LIFE'S MISTAKES.

I TAKE the truth home to my heart, and stand
Helpless, like one the tide bears from the land,
The happy land, where dwell his household band.

Self-blinded I have been ; no cruel blame
Shall fall on her who nobly bears my name ;
No thought of mine shall stain her spotless fame.

The bright-eyed stars in summer nights that shine,
The purple grape before 'tis changed to wine,—
No purer are than this pure wife of mine.

She charmed me like some painting rare and old,
My soul twined round her, sinuous fold on fold ;
But I was proud and kept my love untold.

I tried to stifle what I felt, and said
I'd starve my passion till its roots were dead,—
For I was poor, and she was nobly bred.

But love is strong, and like the mighty sea,
Which dashes helpless vessels on the lee,
It burst the bounds I set, and conquered me.

I took her hand in mine one summer day,—
She met my look, and did not turn away :
Her blue eye's sadness haunts me still away.

Had she but told me she had loved before,—
That through some sad mistake the dream was o'er,
And that her heart was dead for evermore !

I fondly thought no other lips had pressed
The red of hers ; I thought her quiet breast
Had never held another head to rest.

I smoothed her dainty fingers white as snow,
And watched her face to see her pale cheek glow,
And thought no other man had touched her so.

Oh, those were days stolen from Heaven's delights !
I walked on flowers, and trod enchanted heights,
Whose airs were balm, whose walls were chrysolites.

She smiles upon me now, and keeps away
From *him*, because she minds her vows alway ;
And unto me she gave herself for aye.

He came among us, handsome, frank, and free ;
His manly beauty strangely won on me,—
Ah ! had I seen th' inevitable To-Be !

I saw them when they met. She grew as white
As graveyard marble, in the cold moonlight,
That through the oriel window fell so bright.

He touched her fingers ; bowed his stately head ;
I saw his swart cheek flush with burning red,
And she—the royal woman I had wed—

She turned from him with fine, exquisite scorn,
E'en while her brow glowed like the brow of morn ;
And I stole out, and wished myself unborn !

He flirts and trifles with the gay young girls,—
Admires their eyes, and twines their pretty curls,
And tells them that their teeth are like white pearls.

But when he meets *her*, all the nobler sense
Of his starved soul flames up in power intense !
Well, who knows what may be a century hence ?

They both are noble. Both remember me ;
And go their separate ways all silently,
Hiding the lack that ne'er will cease to be.

Their story is a simple one to tell,—
What is more simple than a funeral knell ?
They loved each other, and they both loved well.

She thought him false ; her purse-proud friends helped on
The sad delusion ; gold his love had won ;
And she was proud, and faith was all undone !

Well, I shall live my life out by her side ;
Feeling, with all my bitter grief, some pride
That she will fall not, though she be sore tried.

PRAYER.

THE rosy day is fading out
Along the western sky ;
And through the mellow summer air
The white cloud-vessels fly ;
A breath of odor faint and sweet
Comes from the meadow's breast,
And all the earth, and heaven, lie
Serene in quiet rest.

The universe sleeps tranquilly
Beneath the eye of God ;

And weary feet are resting now
Which devious ways have trod ;
Shall lack of faith, and lack of hope,
Disturb and tear my breast ?
Shall doubt of Heaven's mercy fill me
With a vague unrest ?

Perplexed and dark my spirit is,
I cannot see the way ;
And grim night flings its banners out
Across the brow of day ;
But though the distant heights are hid
In veils of chilly mist,
I'll not despair,—the vapors flee
When by the sunbeams kissed.

Heaven seems a long, long distance off,—
Shut in by brazen bars ;
Forbidding in their pale, pure light
Twinkle the gleaming stars.
Failing to call a blessing down,
I'll climb the winding stair,
And reach the City of our God,
Borne by the breath of *prayer*.

A W A K E N E D.

THERE is a new-born glory in the skies !
The sunsets never showed such radiant dyes,
The stars ne'er shone with such bewildering eyes !
All things created are to beauty given,
And earth has borrowed the delights of heaven !

The birds and streams sing more melodious airs,
The wild old forest a new splendor wears :
All that I view with love my heart ensnares !
When the whole soul its full love-wealth is giving,
There is an ecstasy in simply living !

The atmosphere is full of rare, sweet stills,
A mystic something all the broad space fills ;
The winds that touch me sweep the Eternal Hills ;
And through the crimson clouds of mist that rise
I almost catch a glimpse of Paradise !

A life like this were fullest perfectness !
Heaven, to be heaven, must own no glory less,
Else would it lack in royal blessedness ;
And even there, amid the waste of flowers,
Our longing hearts might turn to these charmed hours !

Beloved ! it is a gracious thing to know
Thyself beloved ! and more than all below
That love should cherished be ; but ah, not so !
For a true woman, loving while she lives,
Loves not the love she takes, but that she gives !

A CHANGE OF OPINION.

MOTHER.

BESSIE, 'tis time the brindled cow was milked !
The shadows of the hill
Are falling down so fast they hide away
The roof of Walton's mill,—
Go, Bessie, ere the gloom of weeping night
Comes with its wings of ill.

DAUGHTER.

But, mother dear, Will Kendall said, yestreen,
To-day they'd reap the grain,
And he'd come over at the set of sun
To help me glean the plain.
Please, mother, can't the brindle heifer wait
Till I come back again ?

MOTHER.

No, Bessie, I'll not have you tramping out
With Will, this chilly night !
Why, child, the very air bears on its wings
A dreadful fever-blight !

Go to your milking, Bess, while yet the stains
Of sunset on the sky are bright !

DAUGHTER.

Well, mother, sure I know dear Will will think
I'm fickle and untrue !
And a great shade of sadness will come o'er
His eye so calm and blue ;
And he will think that I have played him false,—
Not dreaming it was *you* !

MOTHER.

Bessie, 'tis nonsense loving this young Will !
He's plain, and proud, and poor !
If 'twere not for the gossip of the dames,
I'd drive him from my door ;
And I forbid you e'er to see his face,
Or listen to his silly love-words more !

DAUGHTER.

But, mother, Willie's Aunt Jerome is dead,—
Died but a week ago,—
And left ten thousand pounds of gold to Will !
Last night he told me so ;
And he's to be a gentleman, and dwell
Where servants at his bidding come and go !

MOTHER.

Ha ! Ann Jerome is dead ? Bess, say you so ?
And left her wealth to Will ?

Well, child, you needn't mind about that cow,
She'll feed upon the hill ;
And put the ribbons in your curls, my love,
And go and meet young Will.

NEVER AGAIN.

I LOOK abroad upon the calm, fair land,
Where Autumn's breath has dropped a wreath of
snow,
And where the pine-trees, mute with waiting, stand
To strike their harp-notes when the wind shall blow.
Night drops her grand old silence slowly down,
The lines of air and ocean blend in one ;
The gleaming steeples of the distant town
Are lost in mists of twilight soft and dun.
Oh, shall rare joys, and thoughts, and tones, and thrills,
Come to me in this hour of mystic stills,
Never again ?

Oh, I remember in the Long Ago
Such nights as this,—sweet almost unto pain !
When all the world was haloed with a glow,
And full content descended like a rain !
The quiet night passed in a mazy dream
Of golden glows and flowers of brilliant dyes !

I floated down an amber-bosomed stream,
And gazed on summer skies with half-closed eyes !
Now, the soft veil of love and youth is rent :
When will my life be filled with still content ?
Never again !

THE OLD STORY.

THE hills were purple in the twilight haze,
Eastward the full moon showed her silver rim,
And whitely o'er the chain of rock-bound bays
The damp cool sea-fog on the breeze sailed in.

They stood together by the garden-gate,
Lengthening the sweet sad moments as they might ;
The west sky lost its crimson, and, like Fate,
Upon their heads fell down the autumn night.

He held her hand, and all his ardent face
Grew radiant at the touch so subtly sweet !
This old, old earth for him wore fresh new grace,
And turned to love, and joy, beneath his feet !

He said his love was like the eternal hills,
Steadfast, unchanging, as their line of blue !
And in the quiet of the evening stills
He gave his solemn promise to be true !

She trusted him! Women were made to trust!
It is their instinct! Strange they never think
That idols crumble oft to veriest dust,
And joy's full cups break on the fountain's brink!

* * * * *

To-night, this winter night of frost and snow,
She sits alone, sad-eyed, with silver hair!
Her cheek has lost its roundness and its glow,
And all her features are deep-lined with care.

And he? Within a crowded city's mart
He has a home of splendor grand and cold.
A black-haired woman reigns in pride within,—
Her hair was like the sunshine's rippling gold.

Well, life is life, and very brief at best;
We do not live, and leave grief's ways untrod!
Happy, if when we go to find our rest,
Our sorrows have not made us false to God!

IN TIME OF WAR.

THE SENTINEL.

SOLDIER, upon the bastioned wall,
Treading thy solemn, measured beat,
The sky of midnight o'er thy head,
The broad Atlantic at thy feet.
Tell me thy thoughts, as pacing on
Through tropic heat, and moonless air,
The slow night passes, and the morn
Breaks up the east with lurid glare.

The faint breath of the languid South,
So sweet it must have wandered through
The orange-groves of Indian lands,
Or white magnolias wet with dew,
Falls on thy brow with gentle touch,
A soft, insidious, 'wildering breath,
Holding in its voluptuous sweets,
Perchance, the hidden pangs of death.

Tell me thy thoughts, stern sentinel !
Are they of yester morning's strife ?
When 'mid the roar of shot and shell,
And 'mid the shriek of parting life,
Thy bright steel gleamed in yonder trench,
As, leaping on a prostrate gun,
Thy voice sent forth the rallying shout,—
“Huzza ! huzza ! the day is won !”

Art thinking of the coming morn,
When blood-red shall the banners glow,
And on the tented field without
The deadly columns storm the foe?
When 'mid the smoke, and clang of steel,
And 'mid the strife of carnage dire,
Thy stalwart form shall lead the van,
And meet the death-hot, murderous fire?

Is 't fear that blanches thy stern brow?
Fear! should a soldier know the word?
Come life or death, what matters it
When the war-trump his blood has stirred?
Speak, soldier! ah, thy cheek is flushed,—
A tender gleam, like yon soft star,
Lights up thine eye as it is turned
Toward the Northern sky afar.

He answers not. Wherefore's the need?
He thinks not of the battle's din,
Nor of the gloomy, bristling walls
That shut the grim old fortress in:
He knows whose orchard-trees are white
With wildest wealth of rosy snow;
He knows the red-lipped May has kissed
The clover-blossoms into glow.

He sees the low, brown cottage-house,
Half hidden 'neath the sheltering trees,
That gray and mossy lift with pride
The peerless growth of centuries;

His eyes are moist,—'tis not the mist
That rises from the wave-washed shore ;
'Tis a grand weakness, yielded to
For those he may see never more !

Soldier ! it is a thrilling sight
To see the brave man when he weeps
At thought of those whose memories
Fore'er within his heart he keeps !
God bless thee, sentinel, to-night,
While on thy lonesome, watchful beat,—
The sky of midnight o'er thy head,
The broad Atlantic at thy feet !

TOO OLD.

He stands before the cottage door,
An aged man, and gray ;
He hears the neap-tide beat the shore,
And the laughter, on the distant moor,
Of children at their play.

His dim eyes wander off afar,
Beyond the broken lines
Of the rocks that bound the harbor bar,
Of the skies that hold the evening star,—
Beyond the wood of pines.

He looks on sunny southern hills,
Beyond the clouds of gold,—

He gives no heed to the wild bird's trills,
Or the faint perfume of the daffodils
In the garden grand and old.

His weird eyes see the snow-white camp
Pitched on the river bank ;
He hears the sentry's steady tramp,
And the iron hoofs of the war-horse clamp,—
The spur in his bloody flank.

He sees the old flag's red and white,
With field of starry blue,
Float proudly through the purple light,
Above the smoke of the deadly fight,
And the soft turf's crimson dew.

He hears the crash of shot and shell
And sees the flash of the guns,—
He hears the fifes like a funeral knell,
And the bugle-notes like a silver bell,
And the glorious roll of drums !

“ Oh God ! ” he cries, “ for youth again !
For manly strength once more !
I'd strive to the death with might and main ;
I would not shrink at mortal pain,
Or pale at the battle's roar !

“ My hair is white with age, I know,
But if they'd let me stand
With our brave recruits, before the foe,
Where hot shot falls like winter snow,—
With the flag-staff in my hand,—

“I would not flinch, though all the air
Were red with death and flame,—
Though cannon-breaths were in my hair,
And death was busy,—all things I’d dare
For country and her fame !”

The soft night falls,—he breathes a sigh,
He knows his dreams are vain !
But he yearns for the distant battle-sky,
And his old blood stirs to the battle-cry,
And his heart is young again !

ONE AWAY.

THE wild winds whistle down the hills’ dark gorge ;
The leaden air is full of hail and snow ;
And, tossed and harassed by the reckless wind,
The drifts to frigid, white-capt mountains grow.

The cold is brutal : ice reigns everywhere ;
The prisoned streamlet groans in sullen pain ;
The mighty river, flowing to the sea,
Struggles in impotence to break its chain.

It is a night when, thankful unto God
For home and love, we gather round the hearth ;
When we would draw in those we care for most
To our embrace, from all the wide, cold earth.

I shudder, though the grate is crimson red
And all around me is the ruddy light ;
My thoughts go out to wander after *one*,—
To wonder where he is this boisterous night !

Sleeps he beside the camp-fire's dying glare,
Dreaming of home and friends so far away ?
Or pacing on the lonesome picket-guard,
With weary waiting for the break of day ?

The tents gleam whitely through the torpid night ;
The earthworks, sharp defined, rise up below ;
And, through the murky gloom that lies between,
He sees the distant watch-fires of the foe.

His dark eye kindles,—flushes hot his cheek :
Maybe the morrow's sun will shine on strife !
The smoky sky hang over men who meet
To yield up blood for blood, and life for life !

Oh, Heaven ! the winds shriek on like fiends at war !
My heart shrinks cold and shudd'ring in my breast ;
The thought of him upon that deadly field
Breaks ruthlessly through all my hours of rest !

I find no peace, nor comfort ! Heaven, be kind !
This mortal dread of fate, so stern and grim,
Is terrible ! my dreams are full of it !
My life is one long prayer to God for *him* !

AFTER THE BATTLE.

NIGHT settles on the mountain

That flamed an hour ago

With all the grand insignia

Of sunset's fiery glow ;

And through the purple heavens,

High in the amethyst,

The solemn stars are gleaming white

Through the enshrouding mist.

For us, they look on quiet ;

On peaceful, happy homes ;

We hear no roar of cannon,

No crash of warlike drums ;

We see no battle-banners,

Bloody, and stained, and rent ;

For us, no smoke of carnage

Clouds the blue firmament.

O stars, and sweet moon, hanging

Up in the breathless height !

What scenes of desolation

Ye look upon, to-night !

On green fields blushing crimson ;

On bright swords wet with gore,

Dropped from strong hands which grasped them,

But ne'er will grasp them more !

The night is gathering slowly ;
Some faces lie so calm,
You think the dead ears listen
To the eternal psalm !—
Lie blankly gazing upward,
Unheedful night has come,
The time the soldier folds his arms
And dreams of friends and home.

They lie there all together,
Rebel, and Union true ;
Close, side by side, the uniforms
Of gray, and Federal blue ;
White-haired and bearded veterans,
Youths with their locks of gold,
Whose pale, unchanging faces,
Now, never will grow old !

The living claim our weeping ;
The dead, why sorrow o'er ?
They have passed unto God, and He
Cares for them evermore ;
They've crossed the mystic river
And reached the shadowy lands,—
We follow them no further,—
We leave them in His hands.

O God ! our hearts cry daily
For all this strife to cease !
Give us the signal victory,
And give us lasting peace !

Remove all strife and bitterness
From our loved land afar,
And let the time come speedily
When there shall be no war !

IN TIME OF WAR.

THERE is a sadness in the autumn air,
Something, beside the yellow leaf and sere,
Reminds us of the hopes the young spring brought,
Sweet hopes that perish with the waning year ;
And over all the land a sigh of pain
Shudders along the mellow atmosphere.

The great heart of the nation, stirred from peace,
Torn from the quiet languor of its rest,
Breaks lavishly its wealth of crimson life
On Southern fields, and prairies of the West !
Oh, what shall be our final recompense
For all this carnage of our brave and best ?

A Country and a Name ! we stand for that !
Convinced, though suffering, it is better far
To weep for all we love and cherish most,
Than to give up a single glorious star !
And let the right hand perish that would dare
The blue field of our banner thus to mar !

We count the cost. We know the stricken hearts !
God pity them ! and make them strong to bear !

And from the waste wild lands of sea-girt Maine,
Unto the Golden Shore of promise fair,
Unite as one, once more, these severed States ;
And let the cry of Union fill the air !

LITTLE GRAY BESS.

SHE climbs to the window-ledge by my side,—
Little gray Bess,—and she touches my face
With her little wet nose that will not be denied,
And she tosses her head with infinite grace ;
Poor little kitten ! poor little pet !

We have lived on through the sorrow and gloom,—
Ah, little kitten ! if we could forget

To recall that June night with its low-hanging moon !
That long-agone night, when the sea-billows broke
Up the sharp shore with a querulous croon !

George was the last one ;—all of them slept
Low in the valley, beside the sad sea ;
When I buried my dead, I joyed, while I wept,
That God had been kind and left one to me !
When the war-cloud o'er Sumter's walls broke,
He hurried to me with fire in his eye,
My boy's gentle heart to mankind awoke !

"Mother," he said, "who will falter? Not I !
The black name of coward I loathe with proud scorn !
I, too, judge it sweet for my country to die !"

Though my heart trembled, my voice did not quake !
Ah, how the wind whistles across the lone moor !

And the leaves of the sycamore quiver and shake,
And the sea-gulls are flying in thick to the shore !
I told him God speed, and I buckled his sword,
And enjoined him to ever be loyal and true,
To yield up his life ere the flag he saw lowered,
And trailed in the dust its red, white, and blue !
And I bade him remember this work was the best
That God and his country had called him to do !

When he departed, he patted your head,
Little gray Bess ; and I'll never forget
The voice of my boy, as he halted, and said,
"Mother, be kind to my poor little pet."
Ah, little kitten ! you listen in vain !
Listening, and waiting, and watching, are o'er !
Wail, pitiless wind ! fall, pitiless rain !
And beat, wild sea-billows, upon the sharp shore !
Let me shut tight the window, little gray Bess :
He will come in through the wicket no more !

Oh, I remember the fate-burdened day
When they brought me a letter unsullied and white,
Writ in a strange hand,—endorsed "No Delay !"
When I touched it, how swiftly the day changed to
night !
Only a line,—but the letters glowed red
As with blood,—no more and no less :
"Shot through the heart !" Oh, my brave, noble dead !
But we miss him so sorely, little gray Bess !
And it's lonely and sad, for the nights are so long,
And but you and I left in the house, little Bess !

CONSECRATION.

LOVE is the life of a woman ; her chiefest of blessings ;
her all !

Lacking its sweets, her existence of full perfection is
shorn ;

Love, the wonderful alchemist, changes to honey life's
gall,—

Transforms the sad gloom of midnight into the gold
blush of morn !

What shall requite her for Love's loss ? oh, what shall
suffice her instead ?

What shall comfort and quiet her when loveless and
desolate ?

What shall recall her to life again when her heart's
fibres are dead ?

Oh, it is fearful to live with nothing for which you
can wait !

Country ? Yes, country is dear to me ! from its bland
airs I draw breath.

Prosper it, God of our fathers ! now in its bitterest
need !

Sustain it ! save it from tottering down to dishonorable
death !

Uphold it ! restore it, unbroken ! oh, give us heed !

I am weak ; I confess it,—courage will fail me,—must
I yield up

All that I own of earth's glory,—all that I hold dear,
and prize ?

Heaven's beneficent gift to me,—my soul's blest anchor
of hope ?

Smile as I offer it,—clothed, crowned, for the fell
sacrifice ?

True, they soothe me with fair words ; he will win
honor, glory, and fame ;

He will come back to me covered with victory's
proud scars ;

I shall blush red with my pride when the multitude
shout forth his name !

My daring hero ! my valiant knight ! home returned
from the wars !

Well, it may be so, but—if!—oh, that terrible, shud-
dering doubt !

Creeping into my breast,—paralyzing to marble my
heart !

No ! no ! it is useless ! impotent I to cast the in-
truder out !

Cease urging,—ask it not of me ; we cannot exist
apart !

Will Fame assuage death's anguish ? will it make more
enticing the grave ?

Will it dry up a tear, hush a sob, or tear from sorrow
a pain ?

Will it make less chilly and dreadful the ice-cold touch
of the wave

That launches the fearsome mortal out on the unex-
plored main?

I sleep, and my dreams they are troubled,—I hear the
rolling of drums,

The martial blast of the trumpet, the rush of ca-
parisoned steeds;

I see the gray smoke of the conflict, the red hot fog
of the guns,

The crimson stains of the greensward, where many a
true heart bleeds!

Aloft, like the gold gleam of sunlight, the banners flash
on the air,

Above the strife and the carnage where men to
demons are turned;

I see the glitter of broadswords,—the horrible eye of
despair!

Oh, God of Heaven! that honors should be so ter-
ribly earned!

I walk o'er the dread plain at midnight,—my feet are
wet with the gore!

I shudder at dead men's faces gazing blankly up to
the sky,

With eyes that see not the calm stars, with eyes that
shall see nevermore!

Ah me! it is dreadful! dreadful! going to battle to
die!

But some wives must bear it, some hearts suffer and
break:

Why shall not I doom my life to darkness as well?

I shall not be alone;

I *will* be brave, I will conquer! I will not give voice
to a sigh!

Go forth! and God keep thee! thou only and
idolized one!

I will kiss him my last, and my lips shall not quiver
nor shrink;

I will chill not his ardor; his great heart, so loyal
and true,

Shall not beat one throb slower for me, shall not with
heaviness sink

For my grief, or my tears. I will show what a woman
can do!

And if the worst comes,—if he falls,—so let it be!
Great grief is dumb!

Who shall proclaim my bereavement unto the people?
Not I!

He will be lonesome with waiting,—I shall be speedy
to come;

There will be left to me this,—thank God! blessed
comfort—to *die*!

UNDISMAYED.

COURAGE ! ye fainting hearts !
Though darkness rules to-day,
Maybe the morrow's sun may chase
The mist and gloom away.
Though now War's clarion tongue
Rings through the startled air,
The voice of Peace shall yet proclaim
Its victory everywhere !

Grim into every house
Some fearful trouble comes !
Oh, God ! the lonesome hearts to-night,
The desolated homes !
For us who stay behind,
To watch, and pray, and wait,
The lot is harder than for those
Who go to seek their fate.

But shall we fail, and sink,
Beneath the weight of woe ?
We who have bid our dearest ones
Gird on the sword and go !
No ! though we suffer loss,
And weep our secret tears,
We look beyond the present time,—
Look to the coming years.

No grand great good can spring
Through painless ease to birth !
The hand of chastening falls with weight
Upon the cringing earth !
But midst it all, we know,
Through darkness and through light,
That God is strong enough to bring
The victory to the Right !

October, 1862.

A SOLDIER DEAD.

HE died amid the red hot smoke of battle,
Died, with the flag, blood-purchased, in his hand ;
Died, with his white lips shouting, " On to victory !"
Cheering, and urging on his bold command.
Beneath a Southern sky of softest azure,
His grave-faced comrades laid him down to rest,
While muffled drum-taps stirred the air of evening,
And the great sun hung low within the west,—
Laid him to sleep with the blood-reeking banner,
So dearly won, shrouding his lifeless breast.

What need of sculptured urn, or mausoleum,
To tell his virtues, consecrate his name ?
He perished for his country ! death all-glorious !
The proudest fate that's given man by Fame !
A nation's tears are his,—a nation mourns him,—
His monument shall outlast space and time !

He was a soldier ; shared a soldier's fortune,
And yielded up his life in manhood's prime ;
Proud of the honor,—proud to be selected
To die a death so royally sublime !

A fair New England home is drear without him,
Bright eyes are sad with weight of unshed tears ;
The memory of his lonely grave will darken
The lives of kindred for these many years.
But let them joy that for their noble country
They had this dear one for a sacrifice ;
He is not lost,—the eyes of a great nation
Have marked the lone spot where his mortal lies ;—
For, though recorded not on history's tablets,
It is an epoch when a brave man dies !

Yes, leave him there,—the wild and grand Atlantic
Shall sing his dirges now and evermore ;
Shall daily chant his requiem, as the surges
Beat up the curvings of the sandy shore.
The strife and tumults of his life are ended ;
For him, the " Charge," " Advance," " Sortie,"
are done ;
He'll face no more the hail of hostile cannon,
The smoke of conflict darkens not his sun !
He's scaled the walls, and gained the heavenly bastions ;
His peace is come ; his bloodless victory's won.

IN MOURNING.

You say I must be calm, and try to bear
This chastisement as a brave woman should,
Content, nay, prideful, that I've yielded up
The life of my life for my country's good.

I must be calm,—well, stone is not more calm !
I do not wring my hands, or beat my breast ;
My eyes are dry ; I've not a tear to shed,—
My fretful weeping might disturb his rest.

Sighs come not from my lips ; feeling is dead ;
Only a dull endurance reigns within,—
Disturbed, at times, by longings wild and vague
To cast off life, it is so cold and grim.

An open grave lies ever at my feet,
Whether I wake, or toss in restless sleep ;
I smell the damp fresh mould, and hear the spade
Go crunching down, to make it dark and deep.

I see him lying by its ghastly brink ;
The crimson banner with its bars of white,
Bought with his life, folding his quiet breast,
And gleaming blood-red through the moonlit night.

He looked his last upon the fair blue sky,
Clouded with smoke of battle's lurid breath ;

Heaved his last sigh where greedy cannon mouths
Had drank all the sweet air, and left but death.

No gentle hands to touch his clammy brow,
No tender kisses on his silent lips,
No voice of love to soothe his failing ear,
No kiss to close his eyes in death's eclipse.

Leave me alone ! words are of little worth
That fall on deafened ears ! leave me alone !
Your comfortings *mean* well : take thanks, and go !
What use to waste your breath upon a stone ?

DUST TO DUST.

SILENCE all around us,
Camp-fires burning low ;
Stern and gaunt, the sentries
On their slow beat go.

Here in early twilight,
Under sparkle of stars,
We have gathered in silence,
Men of battle and scars,

Gathered to bury a comrade,
Only a raw recruit ;
Lying ghastly before us,
Stirless, and pale, and mute.

Grimy and brown his forehead,
Matted his curling hair ;
Lift the chestnut masses,—
You'll see his death-wound there.

Cover his broad breast lightly
O'er with the faded blue ;
Wrap the banner round him
Damp with the reeking dew.

Lay his rifle beside him,
Hollow his bed in the sand,—
Pile the loose soil above him
With an unsparing hand.

Read the burial-service,
“Dust return unto dust,”—
Here in the dark we leave him !
God, we are needy of trust !

Leave him ! Night is advancing,
The moon is white on the hill ;
The cry of the open-eyed sentry
Challenges hoarsely and shrill.

Silence, sadness, and quiet,—
Only the sea's solemn moan
Comes to our ears from the harbor,
As we leave him alone.

WIDOWED AND CHILDLESS.

THEY brought me the news last night, at moonrise ;
I was sitting just here, where the silver fell in ;
I remember I thought, as I looked at the skies,
That the world seemed too pure for the entrance of
sin.

I laid down my head on the cool window-ledge,—
Half happy, half sad with a trembling unrest ;
I drank in the sweets of the white hawthorn hedge,
And flushed in the air gushing soft from the west.

A faint, hollow knock at the portico-door
Jarred on my ear ; was it fancied or real ?
Sadder sound than had ever alarmed me before,
Or wakened from slumber my dreaming Ideal.

I shuddered,—'twas cold,—the night air was chill ;
Frigid and icy, my heart stopped its beat.
Omen ? oh, was it an omen of ill ?
What grim, ghastly phantom my vision would greet ?

Slowly and solemn my visitant came,
With irresolute lips and tear-brimming eye ;
Spoke to me pitifully,—called me by name
In a broken voice choked by a shuddering sigh.

“There has been a great battle! Many are slain!”

“Tell me,” I cried, “with whom victory rests?”

“Our proud flag,” he said, “floats high o’er the plain
Where our brave soldiers lie with their swords on
their breasts.”

“Thank God!” I cried out—“thank God for the
Right!”

“Madam,” said he, “our true-hearted, brave men
Went down unto death by scores in the fight,
Went down in the fell cannonade!”—and what
then?

“God rest them!” I said; but a sharp sword of dread
Pierced into my breast; I felt chilly and numb;
“Speak the worst,” said my eyes: “are they living, or
dead?”

But my cold lips were ice-flakes frozen and dumb.

• Could it be? can it be? no! no! no! no!
God is too merciful,—God is too kind!
Both my brave sons,—my darlings! laid low!
• Heaven be pitiful! I fall,—I am blind!

Is not that quite enough! both of them slain!
Torn by the cruel shot, bruised by the shell?
Lying still, cold on the blood-crimsoned plain,
Uniformed, armed, open-eyed, as they fell!

“Still another,” said he. My husband? Great God!
“Killed by a shot from a bold grenadier!”
Poured out his life on the red, reeking sod,
While the tramp of mad chargers smote on his ear!

I am blasted, desolate, lightning-cursed, shorn !
Let me alone in your triumph, alone,—
Why would you trouble the stricken, afflicted, forlorn ?
Leave me, and pass me ! I am feelingless stone !

When your army comes back with flags streaming out,
With rolling of drums, bugle-blasts, and huzzas,
Flushed hot with your triumph, aloud ye will shout
For the brave, and point to their badges of stars.

Ay, look ! let the gleam dazzle ! cast not away
A thought to the soldiers who toiled, bled, and died !
Let them rest ! they fought well through the smoke-
darkened day ;
And when you pass me,—look away,—turn aside !

COMING HOME.

“ ELEVENTH NEW HAMPSHIRE. ”

OH, God be thanked that from the depth
Of War's distressing night
We see, across the Southern hills,
At last, a gleam of light !
The spotless hand of Peace holds out
The olive-branch and palm,
And o'er this harassed land of ours
There falls a space of calm ;

Yes, God be thanked ! lift up the cry !
And, June winds, bear it flitting by,
 Laden with summer balm.

From many a bloody field
Behold the heroes come !
We've doubted long ; but now we see
 Our soldiers coming home !
Worn, and unkempt, and rough,
 Scarred, and in coarse array,
But bearing still the same true hearts
 They took with them away !
Oh, welcome them with heart and hand,
The gallant, loyal, faithful band
 Who come to us to-day !

We miss some faces that we knew :
 Beneath the Southern grass
They lie, with eyes that do not note
 The shadows as they pass ;
With cold ears deaf to all the sound
 Of martial fife and drum
Which thrills upon the summer air
 And calls their comrades home !
But heaven is just as near their rest,
And God, who loves those brave ones best,
 Has spoke the sweet word, " Come ! "

Welcome to all the boys in blue !
 They've earned the right to fame !
We speak of them, and own with pride
 There's something in a name !

God bless the feet that trampled down
The banner of the bars,—
And bless the hands that held aloft
The glorious stripes and stars !
And let the brazen bells ring clear,
And let the people, cheer on cheer,
Welcome these men of scars !

GLEAMS OF PEACE.

THE June sky reaches down, pure, deeply blue ;
The fields grow crimson in the clover glow ;
A glimpse of heaven has almost broken through
The screening veil, to cheer us as we go ;
And God, who has frowned on us, smiles again,
And turns to gladness all our weary woe.

Four years of blood ! The way has been so sad !
The life-blood of our bravest and our best !
Many have yielded up all that they had
To save their country ! loyal manifest !
Yielded them to the nobly deathless fame
That shall forever mark our soldiers' rest !

To die for Country, Liberty, and Right !
A holy cause ! I almost envy those
Who sleep in nameless graves, this summer night,
A sacrifice unto our country's foes !

No better death to die ! no grander fate
To meet and conquer, all the wide world knows !

We look for day ! we think the night is o'er !
The south wind, sighing o'er the blooming hills,
Speaks to us gently thoughts unsaid before,
And in the solemn hush of twilight stills
We catch Divine suggestions of the peace
Which shall descend upon us when God wills.

The war is ended ! Do we think, and speak,
The words with all the grateful thrill they claim ?
Have our hard lessons brought submission meek
Unto His will, whom all the angels name
With reverent voices, as we mention those
Whom holy martyrdom consigned to fame ?

We weep for those we loved and yielded up ;
There are deep graves in many bosoms here,
Sorrow's stern hand has pressed the bitter cup
To many a lip ; but God is always near
To those who mourn ; and He will not forget
To dry the weeping eye and anguished tear.

At peace ! My soul thrills at the welcome sound !
At peace once more ! No battle-trump to blow !
No martial bugles o'er the hills resound—
No tramp of armed men—no crimson flow
Of life upon the hillsides' lush green grass ;
At peace ! and o'er us summer's golden glow !

June, 1865.

SPRING.

1866.

THE quiet earth greens at the touch of spring ;
No more the mild blue skies are dim with smoke,
No more the bugle's startling war-notes ring,
No more the sunshine glints the sabre's stroke.

The bluebird whistles from the forest tree ;
The wood is sweet with wild arbutus' breath ;
The winds that sweep the fragrant southern sea
No longer bring us news of strife and death.

The war is ended ! we can sleep at night,
Dreaming no more of bristling battle-plains,
Where men and horses mingle in the fight,
And shot and shell drop fast their murderous rains.

The faithful sentinel can rest him now ;
His musket hangs above some cottage door ;
His children climb to kiss his lips and brow,
And hear the story of the charge once more.

Peace reigns. 'Tis quiet all across the land !
The hearth-fires gleam ; the heroes are at home,
Save those who fell from out the loyal band,
Whose tired feet will never homeward come.

God rest them well ! and let the summer rain
Fall gently on the sod that o'er them grows !
Relieved from care, released from toil and pain,
They heed not summer's flowers or winter's snows.

Bought with a price ! a price of precious blood !
This glorious peace that in the end is ours !
God sent His judgments in a fiery flood,—
His peace at last, her forehead crowned with
flowers !

AT LAST.

THE snows of winter fall around ;
The Northern breezes blow ;
The hearth is piled with blazing logs,
That fill the room with glow ;
No more our thoughts go out afar
To dreary prison-cells,
No more the south winds seem to us
Like dismal funeral knells.

No more the printed page of death
Glares in our shrinking eyes ;
No more we seem to hear, by night,
The dying's feeble cries.
Thank God for that ! at last, at last,
The weary war is o'er !

Oh, days of waiting, nights of gloom,
Return to us no more !

Something is lost from many a home !
Somewhere they lie to-night,
The noble hearts who died to win
The battle for the right.
Peace to them ! Though we miss the love
That swelled for us alone,
We're thankful that they died a death
We'll never blush to own !

And for the living ! those who've come
Back to their homes again,
Scarred with their wounds, all bronzed, and gray,
And furrowed with sharp pain,—
Be tender of them ! We have dwelt
In peace and quiet here,
While they have fought to save for us
All that we held most dear.

Honor the soldiers ! Wheresoe'er
You see the faded blue,
Think that it hides a loyal heart,
To land and honor true !
And when at night, these wintry nights,
We gather side by side,
One moment's tender silence give
To those who fought and died.

POEMS OF THE SEASONS.



JANUARY.

THE snow lies heavy on the hills,
The lowland wastes are white,
The sharp wind whistles shrill and cold
In the great elms, to-night ;
And through the dim old hemlock woods
It heaves a quivering sigh,
And all the glittering host of stars
Listen and hear the cry ;
While like a globe of frozen ice
The moon hangs in the sky.

The hazel's dainty twigs are white,
Touched by the silvery frost ;
The hawthorn and the cedar hedge
In fleecy drifts are lost ;
And down upon the broad blue lake
The waters take their rest
Beneath the crystal coffin-lid
Of ice upon their breast :
A conquered warrior, pinioned down,
The mill-wheel stands confessed.

Out on the river's glittering plain
The skater's steel rings clear :
Winter's for him the carnival
Of all the beauteous year ;

O'er the hard-trodden frozen track
The gay sleighs speed along,
The iron hoof-beats keeping time
To many a wild old song,
And underneath the soft fur robes
Young hearts beat high and strong.

Midwinter ! though we own thy reign
A tyrant's, yet, for all,
There are some compensations still
Within thy frozen thrall !
With hope, and youth, and love for ours,
It's little grief to know
That all outside our fire-lit home
Is buried in the snow ;
For when we live with those we love,
We bask in summer's glow.

FEBRUARY.

THERE is a silence chill as death, and deep,
O'er all the stretch of wood, and field, and plain ;
River and brook are hushed in noiseless sleep ;
The fields wear garments white without a stain ;
The bare gaunt trees are draped with glittering frost ;
The sun will change each diamond flake to gold.
Night, pitying them, because their leaves were lost,
Covered their shivering limbs up from the cold .
With fleecy frost, soft feathery fold on fold.

The moaning pines have ceased their tireless song,
And stand in majesty, erect and grim,
Black where the shadows lie in state along
Their frozen labyrinths, so weird and dim ;
But by-and-by the northern wind will rise,
And through their organ-pipes his strong breath
sweep,
And all the soul of song which underlies
These subtle silences shall rouse from sleep,
And stir to life, and sound, the hush so deep.

The lowlands, where the river winds its course,
Its sinuous course, through swamp, and wood, and
fell,
Are resonant with voices rude and hoarse,
Which wake the echoes of the hemlock dell ;
Sharp as the crack of deadly rifles breaks
Upon the shuddering air when strife is dread,
The solid ice, which covers streams and lakes,
Snaps where the frost its mail has sundered,
As if the dead stream turned beneath its coffin-lid.

The stars grow faint, and merge into the glow
Which bursts through all the sable face of night ;
The waning moon far in the west hangs low,
And sinks her lessening crescent out of sight ;
The yellowing east glows warm, and streaks of fire
Shoot zenith-ward, the horizon burns red ;
The mountain-brows, that to the clouds aspire,
Blush in the soft effulgence round them shed,
And all the earth with sunlight is o'erspread.

M A R C H.

MUD underfoot, fogs overhead,
Rain, drizzle, gloom, and mist,
Winter and Spring are reconciled,
Have met again and kissed.
Uncertain, fickle, fierce, and false,
A monster in his rage
Is March, a lion wild to break
The boundary of his cage.

Parent of winds and frantic storms,
Patron of sulky nights,
When all the sky is bloody red
With dancing Northern Lights ;
Repenting now and then, to show
Suns like the suns of June,
And soft, cerulean, placid skies
Above a placid moon.

White snows, forgetful of the time,
Drifting across the hills,
And spurious ice bridging across
Emancipated rills ;
Touches of fiercest polar cold,
Blasts from boreal shores,
Sweeping with fiendish rage and spite
The dreary waste of moors,

Crushing with brutal cold the flowers
That fain would burst to bloom,
Dooming all vegetating things
Unto a common tomb,
Nipping with frosty breath the life
Of bud, and sprout, and leaf;
But little care we for his power,
Knowing his reign is brief.

APRIL.

A FAINT, soft breath from low-hung skies,
As if it swept o'er flowers;
A languid sweetness running through
The long day's dreamy hours;
The violet haze upon the hills
Drops on the leafless trees,
And in the west the setting moon
Is drowned in purple seas.

A sweet, green prescience clothes the fields;
And, in the bosky dells,
The violet and forget-me-not
Unclose their bright-hued cells;
The streams released from icy chains
White down the highlands flow,
And the great river's troubled breast
Is white with foamy snow.

The fruit-trees droop with crimson buds,
A prophecy of bloom ;
The crocus and the daffodil
The garden-beds illumine ;
The pale arbutus springs to life,
And opes its starry eyes
In quiet forest paths and vales,
Where mellow sunshine lies.

Anon upon the crystal air
Rings out the robin's note ;
And from the tall elm by the spring
The bluebird's warblings float ;
The lambs bleat on the pasture hills,
And frolic at their play,
And all the earth seems listening
To hear the step of May.

MAY.

THE air is full of golden glows :
Sweet prophecies of June
Are on the sunset skies each night,
Which face the rising moon ;
In molten seas of amber mist
The stars shrink out of sight,
And in a maze of fervid hues
The day blends with the night.

The morning airs are sharp with frost ;
Smells of the pine and fern
Come from the east hills, where like fire
The sunrise glories burn ;
And in the pasture at the gate
The lazy cattle stand,
Watching the farmer as he goes
To sow his fertile land. •

The dandelion stars the field
With yellow splendor gay,
The orchards dress themselves in white,
Because the time is May ;
The plains are greening in the sun,
And soon the clover grass
Will crimson all the meadow-lands
O'er which the wild bees pass.

Oh, rare west winds, and airs of balm,
Steal down from wild-wood heights !
Oh, scents of spruce, and pine, and fern,
And breath of sweet delights,
Come softly to me, o'er the reach
Of rippling sunlit bay,
And linger long,—oh, linger long !
Because the time is May !

JUNE.

A RADIANT wealth of golden stills,
A tender azure sky,
A wind whose touch is sweet and soft
As breaths of Araby ;
Nights luminous with twinkling stars,—
Heaven's lamps of crystal bright,—
While over all the moon pours down
Her flood of silver light.

The clover-blooms on meadow-lands
Scent all the ambient air,
And crimson roses lavish forth
Their odors sweetly rare ;
The chestnut-trees droop heavily
With weight of verdant leaves,
And through the cool shade of their boughs
The west wind's spirit breathes.

A white mist shrouds the distant lake
In a soft, fleecy veil,
And hides the lilies floating there,
The lilies pure and pale ;
The crickets chant beneath the grass
A lonesome, weird refrain,
Like the slow beating on the turf
Of the autumnal rain.

The sleepy whip-poor-will pours forth
His melancholy song,
So like the wailing, sorrowing note
Of some immortal wrong;
And on the shingly shore the waves
Make music sad and low,
As they toss up their foamy wreaths,
White as the drifted snow.

Oh, June! rare month of love and hope!
Sweet time of birds and flowers,
Of golden hushes, royal calms,
And long, bright, sunny hours!
Methinks at this full flush of life
Grand instincts spring to birth,
And that in June sweet heaven seems
A little nearer earth.

JULY.

CLAD in her robes of green and gold
And royal purple, fold on fold,
Midsummer's gracious Queen
Enters her kingdom, blossom-crowned,
And sheds her peerless grace around
With majesty serene.

She brings a wealth of deep-blue skies,
Hot sunsets flushed with scarlet dyes
And sweet with airs of balm.

Voluptuous swells of melody,
Bird diapasons wild and free,
Break on the pulseless calm.

The springs are low ; the tall grass dips
Within the brook its thirsty lips,
To drink with eager zest ;
In the green woods the shadows lie
So deep, the south wind's lang'rous sigh
Scarce palpitates their rest.

July ! thou priestess of the year !
Sweet Southron, from a tropic sphere !
Native of some far shore !
Rich tones, and thrills, and breaths, are thine,
The *souvenirs* of lands divine
Thy mantle hath swept o'er !

AUGUST.

SKIES deeply blue as mountain lakes,
A languorous atmosphere,
Hills bathed in clouds of purple haze
And seeming strangely near ;
Radiant and bright, a ball of fire,
The great sun burns with fierce desire
On the perfecting year.

The elms droop lazily, scarce stirred
By the inactive breeze ;

The red-winged birds drone dreamily
 Within their bowers of leaves ;
While knee-deep in the sluggish brook
The cattle stand with drowsy look
 Beneath the cool, green trees.

The reaper's song rises and falls
 Along the ripening wold ;
The wheat-stacks stand like plumed hussars
 In uniforms of gold ;
And, far away across the plain,
The teamster drives the loaded wain,
 And whistles all so bold.

Twilight descends, a veil of sweets,
 Warm with an amber mist ;
The sunlight and the moonlight
 Have met in love, and kissed ;
While, through the soft voluptuous sea
Of golden air, the zephyrs free
 Float wheresoe'er they list.

August ! the year's full womanhood !
 How fast thy glad hours fly !
Like all things fair and beautiful,
 Doomed to grow pale and die !
Month of rare flowers and soft-eyed stars,
Of greening leaves and wind-guitars,
 Red moons and purple sky !

SEPTEMBER.

A CALM sky full of clouds of golden mist
Gilding the distant mountains brown and bare ;
Sweet Summer's lips pale Autumn's cheek have kissed,
And left the impress of their warm love there.

Sunsets of vivid gold and purple haze,
Stars that look on you through a mellow calm,
Odors of fruit and flowers, and woodland maze,
And west winds laden with the breath of balm.

On fertile uplands, at the eventide,
The busy reaper piles the groaning wain ;
And the old barn, whose broad doors stand so wide,
Filled to the ridge-pole is with hay and grain.

The corn is ripening in the gracious sun,
The bursting husks display its gleaming gold ;
And on the lowland, rye-stacks, sere and dun,
Like trusty sentinels stand plumed and bold.

The forest gleams with red and amber fires ;
The beech hangs out its primrose-colored flags ;
The sumach artist's pencil never tires
Of painting scarlet all the mountain crags.

At twilight, when the winds are sinking down,
In chestnut woods you hear the sweet refrain

Made by the ripened nuts, as, plump and brown,
They fall like drops of scattered April rain.

The nights are full of grand displays of power ;
The northern skies with spires of flame are set,
Auroral lights in grand disorder tower,
Shaming old Rome with dome and minaret !

O God ! beneath the wonders of Thy hand
I sit in silence ; lip and heart are dumb !
Earth, air, and ocean, all this wide-spread land,
Sprang to existence when Thou bad'st them COME !

Looking up to the dim voids of the sky,
Where sails the moon ; an island in the sea,
My soul is lost !—words and emotions die !
Thought only dwells on Thine Infinity !

OCTOBER.

THE yellow pen of Autumn gilds the green,
And writes a song of glory on the leaves ;
The crimson maples raise their brilliant sheen,
And through the wood the southern balm-wind
breathes.

There are soft voices in the whispering trees ;
Leaf unto leaf saying its sad farewell,—
Hearing afar the blighting brumal breeze
Along gray highlands lift its solemn swell.

The star-eyed frost-flower, at the trees' dun feet,
Nods low, as listening to the fairy sprites,
Which, maybe, at this season love to meet
And trip the elfin dance these lonesome nights.

The snow-white rabbit, changed to dapple gray,
Hops light along the leafy, rustling aisles ;
The squirrel, chirping on his homeward way,
Rests for a moment on the low rail stiles.

The graceful fox, with terror-quicken'd bounds,
Though thirsty, stops not at the silver rills :
He hears the baying of the hoarse-mouthed hounds,
And hunters shouting, down the bare brown hills.

The partridge drums along the yellow dell,
The droning raven croaks on blasted trees,
And in the copse the quail's low piping bell
Charms and entrances with its melodies.

The mellow apples blush in spacious heaps,
Waiting to load the cumbrous harvest-wain ;
The purple grapes gleam on the highland steeps,
And scarlet thorn-plums every hill-side stain.

And at his work the reaper whistles shrill,
Plodding his slow way o'er the wheat-grown wold ;
And in the fields the corn-shocks stand so still
They seem like towers of tessellated gold.

By Northern lakes the wild geese have long talks,
Each shrill voice clamorous, vain of rule and sway,

Till through the air's long labyrinthine walks
To warmer climes they take their circling way.

The sun sinks down ; curtains of mist arise
From murky tarn and sluggish-bosomed pool ;
Dull fogs and vapors hide the gorgeous skies,
And ocean breezes blow in fresh and cool.

NOVEMBER.

THE fallen leaves, wet with the autumn rain,
Strew thickly all the lonely forest aisles ;
The slant gold sunshine falls as if it fain
Would warm the earth to summer with its smiles.
Adown the cold, bleak hills the north wind sweeps,
Fresh from the regions of perpetual snow,
Born in the chill zone where stern Winter keeps
His gates all locked against the summer's glow.

The gliding brook has hushed its soothing song,
And all the pasture rills are chilled to rest ;
The mighty river, as it creeps along,
Bears up a coat of armor on its breast ;
The trees, like bony skeletons, uplift
Their naked arms against the cold blue sky,
And at their feet their cast leaves whirl and drift,
And hide away, like lost brown birds, to die.

A drear, belated robin skims across
The barren heath ; a squirrel, on the wall,

Nibbles his acorn, with no sense of loss,
For autumn's frosts make the ripe chestnuts fall.
The wild geese, fleeing from the Northern lakes,
Mingle their croaking with the shrieking wind,
And through the tangle of the copse-wood brakes
The hunted stag leaps with the hounds behind.

At night the sky above the purple hills,
And all the rifted waste of cloudy heights,
Are radiant, and through the twilight stills
Like chapel tapers burn the stars' bright lights ;
The circled moon, like Saturn and his rings,
Looks with cold eye upon the cold below ;
The air so full of keen and frosty stings
Utters its prophecies of coming snow !

DECEMBER.

THE cold winds, heavy with the breath of frost,
Rush down the lonesome gorges of the hills ;
The withered leaves, their autumn crimson lost,
Strew the smooth surface of the ice-bound rills.

The elm-trees lift their rifled boughs aloft,
The dark pines shiver on the mountain ridge,
And o'er the gliding river's music-soft
The King of Frost has built a crystal bridge.

Soon o'er the mountain peaks that rise supreme,
To bathe their foreheads in the sunset glow,

Like the vague mistiness of some cold dream
Will come the first faint messengers of snow.

Summer is past ! I hear the whispered words
From out the grim hiatus she has left ;
Gone, with her wealth of flowers and singing-birds,
And we, who loved her, sorrow on bereft.

Oh, Summer ! in thy mellow days of balm
The gates swung open to the graveward track ;
Heaven has another voice in the sweet psalm,—
An added treasure,—and the earth a lack.

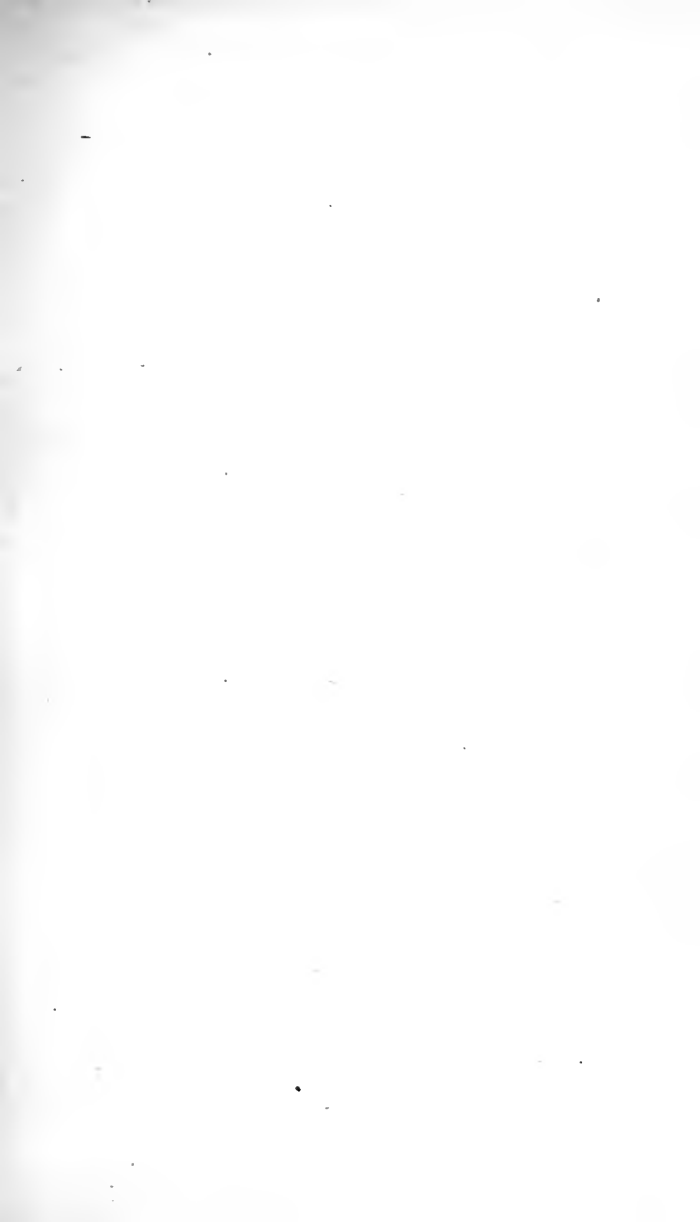
Ah, well ! the way's not long, and by-and-by
We shall look back on what we suffered here,
And wonder that we thought it worth a sigh,
Or worth the silent utterance of a tear !

Passed ! and the harvest ended ! Night is come !
Day dies in sable gloom along the west ;
The night of winter falls : we turn to home,
Our recompense,—our promised place of rest.

I am content ! Amen,—so let it be !
Peace lives within no doubt can e'er dispel !
Throughout all space a calm exists for me,—
I hear the grand assurance—ALL IS WELL !

THE END.















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